



Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Society Conference
31st of July, 2020
Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Babes-Bolyai University

IOAN HOSU & LORINA CULIC

BUILDING BRIDGES

INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIETY





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Editors

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PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ
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Foreword

Organised on July 31, 2020 by the Communication and Social Innovation Research Center (CORE) in partnership with the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CIPI), Babeş-Bolyai University, the conference "*Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Society*", represented an opportunity for doctoral students and young researchers to present their research directions in a dialogue open to different experiences and topics of interest, in order to engage participants in an exercise of high academic prestige.

The Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Society Conference is intended to be the first in a series of annual conferences organized by The Communication and Social Innovation Research Center on the topic of entrepreneurship and social innovation, an event that aims to support students in their endeavor to develop theoretical and empirical valuable research. The goal of the conference is to create a specialized knowledge framework in which the exchange of updated information in the social sciences domain is properly valued.

The volume, *Building Bridges - Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Society*, represents the conference outcome and embodies the authors effort delivered as a number of 28 articles, structured in two sections. The first section, entitled *The Bridge Between Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Economics*, brings together topics focused on defining the entrepreneurial environment and connecting it to the financial and communicational environment. The papers presented relate to the entrepreneurial environment and the context of sustainable development, to the digital skills of entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurial approach at university level, to the process of innovation and the link with strategic communication during the pandemic, to public administration reforms or the impact of the pandemic on the European economy and finances. The second section, *The Bridge Between Education and Society*, features articles on education and educational processes and how these have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, on the health behavior of students, and the impact of education on employability, motivation, discrimination, well-being and some literary or historical case studies. The authors of the current volume assume their compliance with the academic norms and declare their work to be original.

As editors, we hope that this first conference and this volume, *Building Bridges - Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Society*, will encourage and enhance doctoral and young practitioners research skills and their interest in observing, capturing and analyzing societal trends. We would like to thank all the authors for their important and most valuable contribution!

The Editors

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Section 1

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMICS

DESIGNING A PROTOTYPE FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract. *This research focuses on creating a prototype framework for sustainable development in the entrepreneurship context. Presently, entrepreneurs strive to contribute to society's economic success without harming future generations' quality of life. Prior study in the topic has revealed a gap in the literature on sustainable development determinants, which could be included in an elaborated framework.*

We aim to help entrepreneurs laying a positive impact upon the society overall, by harmonizing the interests of all stakeholders, enhancing a perfect symphony between the people, planet, and profits. We contribute towards sustainable development, by designing a composite framework including its major determinants. The study discusses the involvement of entrepreneurs in developing the framework prototype, the role of international organizations for setting the background conditions, as well as the impact of applying sustainable development principles and guidelines on modern society.

The following are the assumptions: (I) Today's entrepreneurship is focused on strategies that increase high profit margins while also providing long-term social and environmental advantages. (ii) Local entrepreneurs assist small communities in developing, increasing employment rates and labor market competition by offering competitive salaries, maintaining higher living standards and technological advancements, investing in education and culture, and improving society's overall well-being. (iii) Combining societal well-being with environmental protection and maintaining the interests of future generations should be based on innovation.

Key words: sustainable development, framework, entrepreneurship, innovation

Introduction

The novelty of this research consists of the fact that this prototype framework for sustainable development within the entrepreneurial environment represents an innovative new project that is going to change the perspective of corporate business strategies. Because contemporary businessmen require innovation, entrepreneurs require both social and environmental interests are relevant. Thus, they will focus on sustainable development, as they consider it vital for the success of the business.

However, Hall et al. (2010) have noted a lack of studies related to the connection between entrepreneurship and sustainable development. As a result, there is a research void in the subject of sustainable development for entrepreneurship, and a study like this could provide fresh and unique ideas. Thus, the current paper investigates the main factors or

determinants affecting sustainable development from an entrepreneurship perspective. Prior research illustrates the need for addressing the topic of sustainable development in an entrepreneurial context (Yeasmin, 2016; Zhou et al., 2020; Youssef et al., 2017; Ahmed and McQuaid, 2005; Shepherd and Patzelt, 2017; Fellnhofer et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2010; Pacheco et al., 2010; York and Venkataraman, 2010; Lawal et al., 2016; Sarango et al., 2018).

Further, scholars and academics (Youssef et al., 2017; Hall et al., 2010) became interested in finding the link between sustainable development and entrepreneurship, as this would help policymakers find practical solutions in order to promote sustainability within the business environment, with positive effects upon society overall.

Research Methodology.

The study methodology incorporates a descriptive approach, qualitative data analysis, and evidentiary support from reliable and trustworthy sources. After an interpretation of a detailed literature review, we gather data on existing frameworks on sustainable development principles, in various fields. By collecting information on guidelines and standards generally applied within the business environment, there should be a place for interpreting and analyzing those components which are most frequently used by businesses in reference to sustainable development practices.

RQ 1: Which are the main determinants of sustainable development within the entrepreneurial environment?

RQ 2: What should a framework on sustainable development comprise in order to be easily accepted and adopted by companies?

Further, we use conceptual analysis in order to define the main set of elements that should be included in a framework for sustainable entrepreneurship. A similar approach is found in the paper developed by Jabareen (2008), where the author itself aims to illustrate a conceptual framework on sustainable development in the business context.

A short literature review on sustainable entrepreneurship

First of all, it should be mentioned that analyzing the concept of sustainable development within the entrepreneurial environment means in fact conducting research on sustainable entrepreneurship.

Yeasmin (2016) defines sustainable entrepreneurship as a mixture of social, economic, and environmental sustainability pillars in terms of a society based on the equity principle, the development of the economy in general, and protecting the natural environment. Further, sustainable entrepreneurship derives from putting together the concepts of entrepreneurship and innovation in order to achieve sustainable development through value creation, incorporating social and environmental benefits, and designing innovative products (Youssef et al., 2017; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2007).

Sustainable entrepreneurship emerged from the need to respond to global challenges such as pollution, climate change, deforestation, environmental degradation, increase in inequalities or other social problems etc. (York and Venkataraman, 2010; Shepherd and Pratzelt, 2011; Wheeler et al., 2005; Senge et al., 2007). Thus, the modern entrepreneur differentiates from the classical one through innovation, the use of green energy, implementing high standards for environmental protection, focus on social responsibility, complying with sustainable development principles (Zhou et al., 2020).

The term entrepreneurship itself brings two different views. From one perspective, there is the development stage of a business, as often the entrepreneurs are considered to manage start-up firms, or small entities, and even medium-sized ones, that all have in common the fast evolution or growth on the market. On the other side, there is the entrepreneurship trend, involving efficiency in resource allocation, innovative products and

services, seeking new opportunities, the entrepreneurs becoming in this case the best leaders, who do not hesitate in taking risks (Ahmed and McQuaid, 2005).

Ahmed and McQuaid (2005) explain the connection between sustainable development and entrepreneurship in their study. First, the scholars claim that new business initiatives at a small or medium-scale should lead to economic prosperity and an increase in living standards for the inhabitants. Still, there can be some side effects, too, such as inequalities in people's income, or even small impacts upon the macroeconomy. Second, if we discuss these issues from an entrepreneurship perspective, innovation brings up green energy, waste reduction, community programs, strong social responsibility policies, and corporate responsible behavior, in general, that contributes to sustainable development. Further, the implementation of modern technologies fosters the innovation process resulting in high-quality products and services for consumers, traded for a fair price, due to the ability of the entrepreneur to decrease its internal costs based on increased efficiency in production. Therefore, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs in general, contribute to sustainable development, impacting its five capitals (World Bank, 2003): financial, physical, human, social, and natural. All these derive into a sustainable society, where sustainable products and services are obtained through innovation, as entrepreneurs develop sustainable business models (Tidd et al., 2005; Ahmed and McQuaid, 2005).

Setting the main determinants of sustainable entrepreneurship

According to some scholars and academics (Kaufman et al., 2003; Crespo and Crespo, 2016, Ang and McKibbin, 2007; Costantini and Monni, 2008; Youssef et al., 2017), driving innovation in entrepreneurship environment is a result of an accumulation of factors: CO2 emissions, Genuine saving index (GSI), Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Trade Openness Index (TOI), energy consumption, financial development, Global Innovation Index (GII), regulation and rule of law, Human Development Index (HDI). All these contribute to attaining the goals of sustainable development (Youssef et al., 2017).

Yeasmin (2016) considers transaction costs and taxes from an economic perspective when defining sustainable development in the business context, while also mentioning the importance of the cultural factor, including cultural network, mentality, tradition. Further, some scholars believe that the characteristics of entrepreneurs should be discussed when establishing the terms for sustainable entrepreneurship. This includes attributes and competencies, communication skills, seeking opportunities, effective and strategic organization, gender and age (Zhou et al., 2020), motivation, role models, ethical behavior, credibility (Yeasmin, 2016). In addition, modern entrepreneurs seek market opportunities and often develop green businesses contributing to social innovation, while the technological factor (Zhou et al., 2020) has a major impact on business success.

Regarding the social and environmental aspects of sustainable entrepreneurship, corporate sustainability literature mentions customer focus, (Mitchell et al., 2010; Gray et al., 2014; Hult, 2011; Jenkins, 2006; Niehm et al., 2007; Perrini et al., 2007), human resource (Jenkins, 2004; Branco and Rodrigues, 2006; Stubblefield Locks et al., 2010), community involvement and social development (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006; Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Steyaert and Katz, 2004), recycling (Hosseininia and Ramezani, 2016; Nikolaou et al., 2011), environmental standards (Crals and Vereeck, 2005) and public policies (Bradford & Fraser, 2008).

Fig. 1 below shows all these factors that have been grouped into various categories: (i) economic factors; (ii) social factors; (iii) environmental factors; (iv) political factors; (v) cultural factors; (vi) technological factors; (vii) characteristics of entrepreneurs.

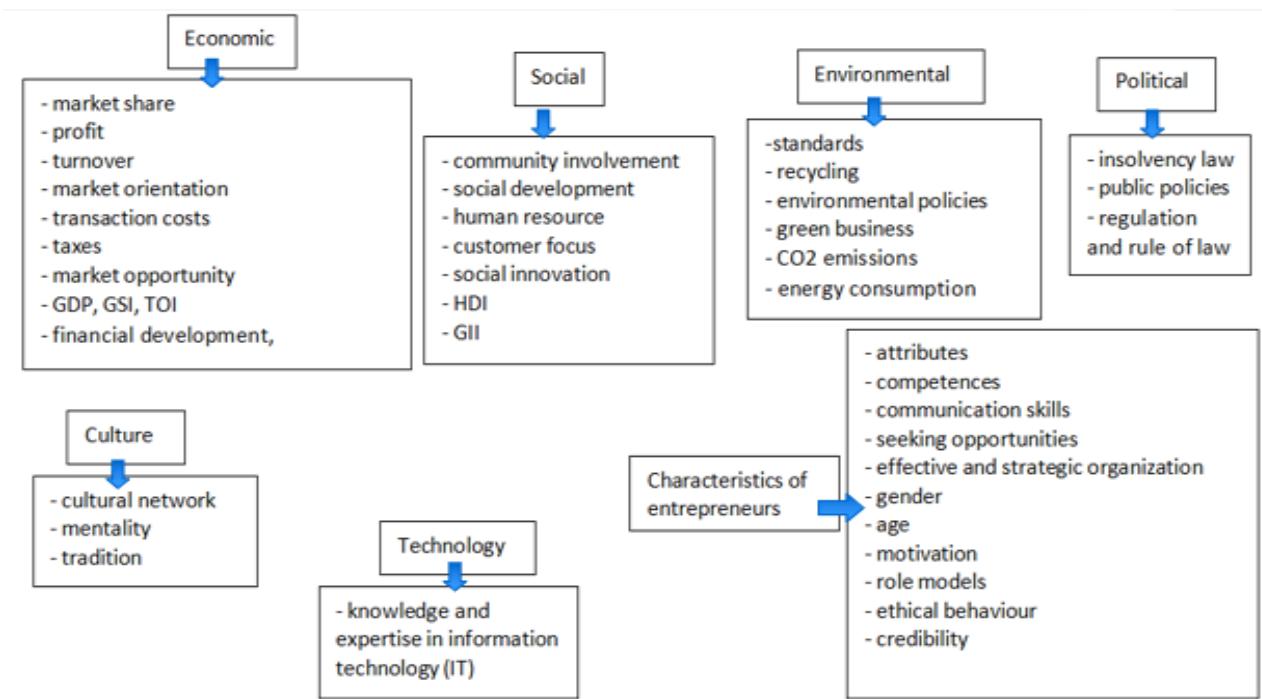


Fig. 1. Factors affecting sustainable development within the entrepreneurial context: determinants of sustainable entrepreneurship
 (Source: author's contribution)

Defining a framework for sustainable entrepreneurship

After analyzing the main factors impacting sustainable development in the entrepreneurial context, we are able to define a new framework that is based primarily on the main determinants of sustainable entrepreneurship.

First of all, we involve in a content analysis upon the main standards and guidelines at the worldwide level in the field of sustainable development. Sustainability reporting literature mentions the twelve most relevant sustainable development frameworks: Sustainable Development Goals, The Equator Principles, United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI), United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment, United Nations Global Compact, SA8000- Social Accountability Standard, OECD Guidelines. Table 1 explains for each of them the issuing organization, the purpose and the content elements, as well as similarities with other frameworks.

Framework	Issuing organization	Purpose	Content elements	Similarities with other frameworks	Source
Sustainable Development Goals	United Nations	increase living standards, fighting for the rights of women	no less than 17 goals on how life can be improved	World Humanitarian Summit; Paris Climate Agreement	(Griggs et al., 2013)
Equator Principles	The Equator Principles Association	linking social-environmental data to finance area, under the form of a risk management framework	social and environmental information for the financial sector	International Organization for Standardization (ISO); United Nations Environment Programme	(Richardson, 2005; Conley & Williams, 2011)

				Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI)	
United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI)	United Nations	sustainability adoption in the financial sector	sustainability principles for the financial sector	International Organization for Standardization (ISO); Equator Principles	(Richardson, 2005; Conley & Williams, 2011)
United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment	United Nations	addressed to institutional investors	investment principles from corporate governance, social, and environmental perspectives	Equator Principles; International Organization for Standardization (ISO)	(Richardson, 2005; Conley & Williams, 2011)
United Nations Global Compact	United Nations	to be implemented by businesses voluntarily	principles on the environment, labor and human rights, anti-corruption	Social Accountability Standard	(Cetindamar, 2007)
International Labor Standard	International Labor Organization (ILO)	militates for dignity and security at work, equity among employees, freedom of choice, good working conditions	standards in the area of labor	Social Accountability Standard	(Reynolds & Yuthas, 2008)
International Organization for Standardization (ISO)	ISO	promote the adoption of ISO 26000 (social responsibility), ISO 31000 (environmental), and ISO 14000 (risk management)	includes social responsibility standards, environmental standards, and risk management related ones	United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI); United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment; Equator Principles	(Murphy & Yates, 2009)
Business Charter for Sustainable Development	International Chamber of Commerce	focusing on environmental-related policies	environmental-related policies	SIGMA Guiding Principles; OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises	(Christmann, 2004; Wee & Quazi, 2005; Chamorro & Bañegil, 2006)
London Principles of Sustainable	UK's Department for	connecting sustainable development	set of principles on how	Sustainable Development Goals	(Richardson, 2005)

Finance	Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	with financial markets	sustainable development can be financed through financial markets		
Social Accountability Standard	SA8000	discusses rights of employees and working conditions	rights of employees	United Nations Global Compact; International Labor Standard	(Robert, 2005)
OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises	OECD	developing responsible business conduct standards	principles on human rights, environment protection, technology, fair competition	SIGMA Guiding Principles; Business Charter for Sustainable Development	(Reinert et al., 2016)
SIGMA Guiding Principles	UK Department of Trade and Industry	guide organizations regarding financial and non-financial aspects	financial performance, environmental, and social-related principles	Business Charter for Sustainable Development; OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises	(Sitnikov, 2013)

Table 1. Analysis of sustainable development frameworks

(Source: author's contribution)

Previous research outlines a series of frameworks on sustainable development that interfere between them, containing similar items or addressing some common issues (Murphy & Yates, 2009; Krstić, 2013; Gond & Piani, 2013; Richardson, 2005; Conley & Williams, 2011). One of the most prominent frameworks for sustainable development in the corporate environment is found under the form of the Sustainable Development Goals, which promote better living standards and derive from two previous reporting directions: World Humanitarian Summit and Paris Climate Agreement (Griggs et al., 2013). International Organization for Standardization (ISO) links to United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI), United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment, and Equator Principles, referring to social responsibility standards, environmental standards, and risk management related ones. The United Nations Global Compact and International Labor Standard are both related to the Social Accountability Standard, as all the three frameworks outline the need for respecting employee rights, including decent working conditions, equity, anti-corruption policies etc., the United Nations adding an extra sustainability pillar of environmental impact, besides the social one (Cetindamar, 2007; Reynolds & Yuthas, 2008).

According to various scholars and academics, the Business Charter for Sustainable Development promotes the environmental pillar of sustainability (Christmann, 2004; Wee & Quazi, 2005; Chamorro & Bañegil, 2006). Both Sustainable Development Goals and London Principles of Sustainable Finance focus on sustainable development and financial markets at the same time (Robert et al., 2005; Richardson, 2005). SA8000 Social Accountability Standard stands for employees' rights and ensuring decent working conditions (Miles & Munilla, 2004). OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises have been applied since 1976, in an attempt to promote responsible business conduct (Reinert et al., 2016). SIGMA Guiding Principles were launched in 1999, at the initiative of three international organizations: Accountability, the

Forum for the Future, and British Standards Institution, under the supervision of the UK Department of Trade and Industry (Sitnikov, 2013).

Jabareen (2008) mentions the need to define a specific framework for sustainable development, in line with the research gap identified at the beginning of the current paper. Further, his work discusses no less than seven concepts for sustainable development: (1) ethical paradox; (2) natural capital stock; (3) equity; (4) integrative management; (5) utopianism; (6) political global agenda; (7), that became part of his conceptual framework for sustainable development (Fig. 2).

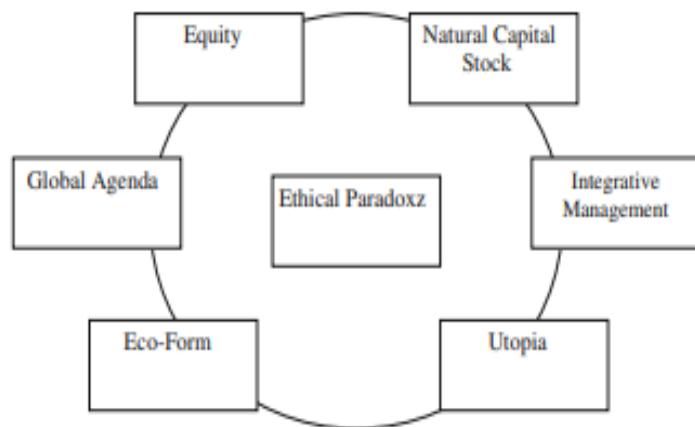


Fig. 2. A conceptual framework for sustainable development
(source: Jabareen, 2008: 188)

Our conceptual analysis based on qualitative data resulted in an innovative framework for sustainable development within the entrepreneurial context. Fig. 3 shows how the seven categories of factors influencing sustainable entrepreneurship combine with most of the elements mentioned by Jabareen (2008) in order to obtain a complex framework system for sustainable entrepreneurship. Thus, the framework focuses on *economic, social, environmental, political, cultural, and technological* impacts, along with the main characteristics of a successful entrepreneur. Nevertheless, *integrative management* processes would contribute to connecting all the mentioned elements, while the *equity* principle together with *labor security and dignity* procedures apply for cultural diversities and social pillars of small and medium firms. Further, *environmental management* comprises policies on protecting the natural environment, while *responsible business conduct* should be found at the border between the *characteristics* of the modern entrepreneur and *law compliance*, from the section on *political implication*. Finally, entrepreneurs have to confront *risk management* issues that of course comprise ultimately all the internal processes of the firm.

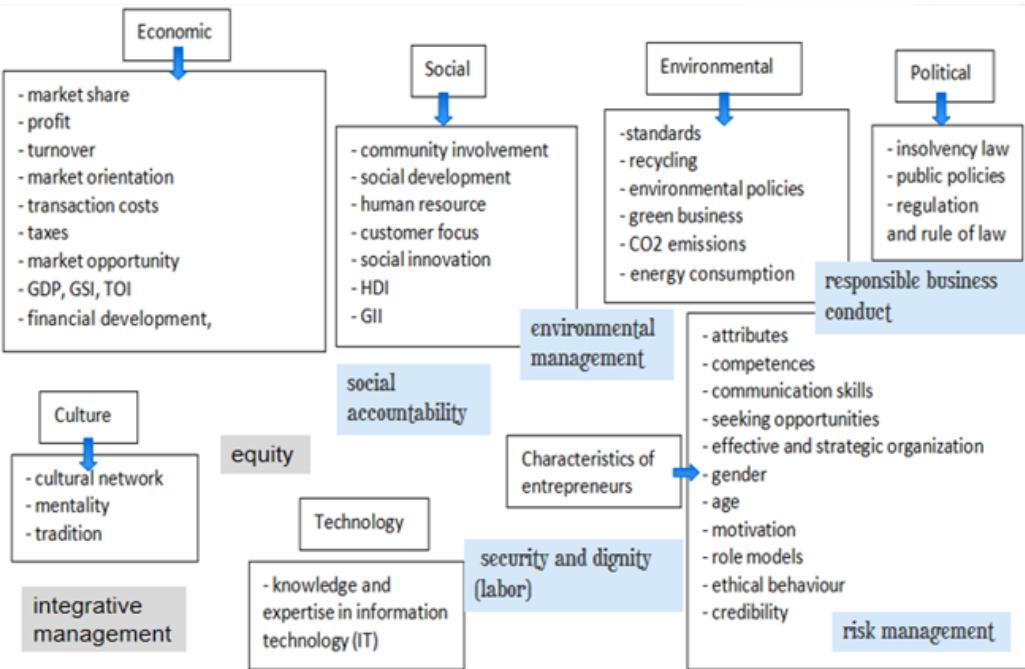


Fig. 3. Designing a framework for sustainable entrepreneurship

(Source: author's contribution)

Conclusions

Innovation in entrepreneurship leads to high-profit rates in the context of long-term social and environmental benefits. Small communities can only develop with the help of local entrepreneurs, through an increase in employment rates, competitive salaries, and better living conditions. The interests of future generations will be preserved by combining social well-being with environmental protection, which is going to be achieved through innovation.

The current paper's academic effect is that it provides a strong and fundamental foundation for future research, as well as a starting point for constructing new theories on sustainable development. Researchers should continue to develop the current study so that it can all be expanded into a high-quality sustainable development framework.

The actual understanding includes a review of positive outcomes in the entrepreneurship environment, company methods, and corporate goals. Entrepreneurs seek to foster sustainable development practices, so a prototype framework will represent the best guide for them conveying suitable advice and eliminating any ambiguity. Finally, governments can improve government action on the ground of sustainable development from a constitutional perspective.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND THE INNOVATION PROCESS: HOW CAN COMMUNICATION BETTER SUPPORT INNOVATION

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Abstract. *This paper evaluates the role of communication in an innovation process presenting arguments from separate innovation studies, as well as concepts from communication science. In light of recent developments in innovation, there seem to be little studies addressing the communication's role in innovation processes.*

Risk and complexity are characteristics of innovations that can lead to resilience in moving forward in the process. This resistance can be at times overcome by a decision-making unit using some of the structural features, such as types of decision-power, communication channels or costs. The interaction of these factors can determine the degree of successful implementation of innovation within organizations. Following this idea, the current research is addressing the role of communication in promoting innovation management and its contribution to the successful implementation.

Strategic communication, alongside with a new perspective of leadership communication and organizational culture, can promote inside a company the so-called "innovative culture" and boost the chances of existing initiatives for change. Therefore, the communication professionals' role should become broader and more complex in order to ensure the success chances of an innovation process and facilitate that 'the potential for change', in complex dynamical settings, is enhanced.

Communication proves to be a vital part of the success of the innovation process and it requires rigorous planning and effective collaboration across the matrix organization. It becomes a circular model that integrates the social, cognitive, affective and conative dimensions of this new extensive role of communication in the innovation process. This paper concludes that communication in the context of innovation processes needs to go beyond the area of traditional tactics of communication in order to ensure efficient and beneficial interactions among all internal and external stakeholders and achieve a higher success rate of the innovation processes.

Keywords: Innovation, Communication, Organizational Culture, Leadership.

Introduction

The innovation process, as one of the main sources of competitive advantage for business, can prove itself to be a challenging process characterized by risk and complexity that can often lead to resilience. At the same time, innovation has been recognized as one of the main drives to boost economic growth (Tülüce & Koç Yurtkur, 2015), therefore, it is essential to identify the elements that can contribute to the success rate of innovation.

Innovation is the catalyst for growth, both for start-ups and for those who want to keep their current business profitable. This concept encompasses different areas, such as openness to new ideas, markets and untapped technologies and, last but not least, means commitment to adapting to industry-specific changes. In companies, facing the challenge of operating in a constantly changing business environment, both in terms of target market segments and the technologies used, the need for innovation is certainly a vital process (Dougherty, 1996, p. 424).

Communications have been considered by many researchers as an integrating part of the organizational values and culture that contribute to the success of innovation, but looking deeper at the process, its phases and at the challenging elements encountered, communication's role seems to be more complex. In light of recent developments in innovation, this paper aims to provide a more detailed discussion of the role and importance of communication in the innovation process and reflect that the traditional approach should be revised. Communication strategy across the organization's matrix can become a vital element, not only for efficient daily interactions, but also for enhancing and encouraging the 'innovative spirit'.

The various constraints of the innovation process cover a wide range of challenges, from lack of time, constant shifting priorities, risk aversion, fear to fail, leadership expectations or even a non-articulated company commitment towards innovation, just to name a few (Fidler & Johnson, p. 1984). All these can prove real obstacles in achieving success in innovation, but in order to address all these different elements, it is necessary to understand the specifics of the innovation technologies and how these are managed in large and small enterprises. This topic has been discussed by Clayton Christensen (1997) in his book, *The Innovator's Dilemma*. He makes a clear difference between two types of innovation technologies that are ultimately seen in any industry, the sustaining technologies and the disruptive technologies.

Sustaining technologies are the ones that improve the performance of an already existing product on the market. In general, large companies are very familiar with this type of technology and they tend to invest heavily in it. One of the reasons is because the market that product addressed is already known and they can easily research what the customers' expectations are. In this case, the market is already considerably large, therefore, the company's need to achieve higher profit margin is easier to obtain. Also, the risk in the case of investing in sustaining technologies is quite low.

Disruptive technologies, however, appear to have a different dynamic and require another approach in a company. These usually end up changing the value proposition in the market by bringing a completely new product that will compete with the current well-known products sold in that industry. In the case of disruptive technologies or products, the market it addresses is little known and is, most of the time, a niche market or not existing at all. In terms of the evolution of these technologies, in the early stage the profit is very low, it offers low performance among mainstream customers and involves a high risk. This happens due to the little information that can be obtained from a market and the few provisions that can be made because such a product has not yet been released yet. The advantage of investing in disruptive technologies, although successful ones can occur less frequently, is that a truly innovative and disruptive product will ultimately steal away the market.

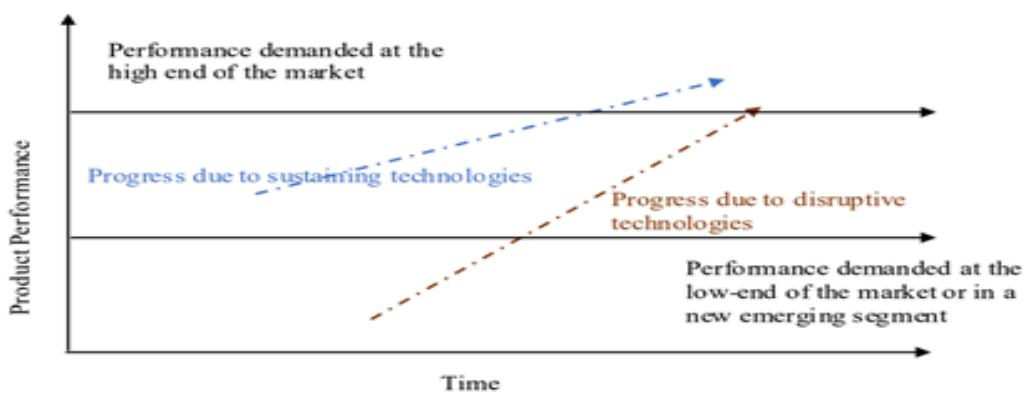


Figure 1
Disruptive vs sustaining technologies (Christensen, 1997, p. xiv)

A relevant topic, when discussing innovation, is the companies' approach towards these two different technologies. After briefly reviewing the main characteristics, it is relevant to further look into how these are seen by large and small companies. Innovation is equally important for all businesses and that is why it is important to understand the abilities and resources that each type of company has. Generally, the study of innovation tends to focus on larger business that can reveal only a limited part of the process. Actually, the innovation process in small companies has a different path and traits (Rothwell & Dodgson, 1994).

For small companies, it is vital to gain competitive advantage by seizing new opportunities. This can be achieved by focusing on unpenetrated markets and investing into value creation. Start-ups that choose to invest in disruptive technologies have the advantage of time in front of the larger companies. As they create or enter a niche market, they can build up their knowledge of both the technology and market and position themselves as the pioneer brand (Raymond & St-Pierre, 2010). It has been revealed, in a particular study in manufacturing, that small enterprises are more innovative but deploy less extreme research and development and patenting activities than large companies (Fuller & Matzler, 2007). Well-established companies are usually a step behind in catching up with the emerging markets, the main reason being the small initial returns that a disruptive technology can bring. Large businesses need to pursue and achieve their growth rates and deliver the expected profits to their shareholders. Inevitably, these will enter the new markets, once their size is considered large enough, but in many cases prominent companies have been toppled by newcomers who tried to introduce technologies that, at first, did not hit the target set by the needs of mainstream customers. Christensen (1997) concludes also that often the common practices of the traditional management that lead to successful development of the sustaining technologies does not work with disruptive technologies. The imminent failure in such cases causes rejection and resilience inside the innovation teams to invest their efforts in truly innovative products.

Most small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have an 'innovative power' due to their flexibility. This allows them to quickly adapt to the changes in the market and to the economic environment (Pislaru, Modreanu & Citu, 2012). This can be because their organization structure is lighter and can adapt more rapidly to changes compared to large companies. On the other hand, in terms of resources available, larger companies will always have a stronger position and will be able to absorb the impact of changes easier, but will be slower to react (Rothwell & Dodgson, 1994).

In order to remain relevant and thrive on the market, companies need to overcome the constraints of the innovation process, in both scenarios. As discussed, although big companies tend to invest in sustainable technologies, and the smaller ones have higher success rate in disruptive technologies, the innovation process can induce uncertainty, fear to fail and resistance to change inside the enterprise.

The foundation of a successful innovation process is the team and a healthy innovation culture internally. Overcoming the fears and barriers experienced by the team, in relation to innovation and building trust alongside a positive environment, are the minimum prerequisites.

Leadership communication, according to Zerfass & Huck (2007), aims at a social dimension that includes organizational conditions and three dimensions that are directly related to their communication (affective, cognitive, conative). The responsibility of leaders, thus, goes beyond the simple stage of information as they become agents of change as promoters of communication. Therefore, when dealing with the innovation management process, the traditional concept of leadership needs to be extended to include a broad role of communication. In this sense, they need to know the rules and restrictions of communication about innovation and use them to shape the meaning of things to come. As

innovation is often viewed with negative emotions such as restraint and fears, the leader must reduce this distancing from new ideas by providing a realistic and motivating picture of the benefits of innovation for consumers, society and the company and its employees. The implementation of communication objectives and measures in the management of the innovative process will bring benefits to the practice of corporate communication.

The skills needed to inform and argue about innovation must be trained at the individual level, a task that can be performed by the communication department together with the human resources department. A first starting point for leader communication about innovations is built in the cognitive dimension, a dimension that aims to accumulate information about new ideas, processes or technologies in interactions with followers.

In a second stage, leaders motivate employees to share their own visions of an innovation (the affective dimension). Any leader must motivate his followers to participate in the innovation process and contribute to the management of meaning with external stakeholders (conative dimension). The main factors for these dimensions are organizational culture, climate and employees that embody the spirit of innovation (social dimension) (Zerfass & Huck, 2007).

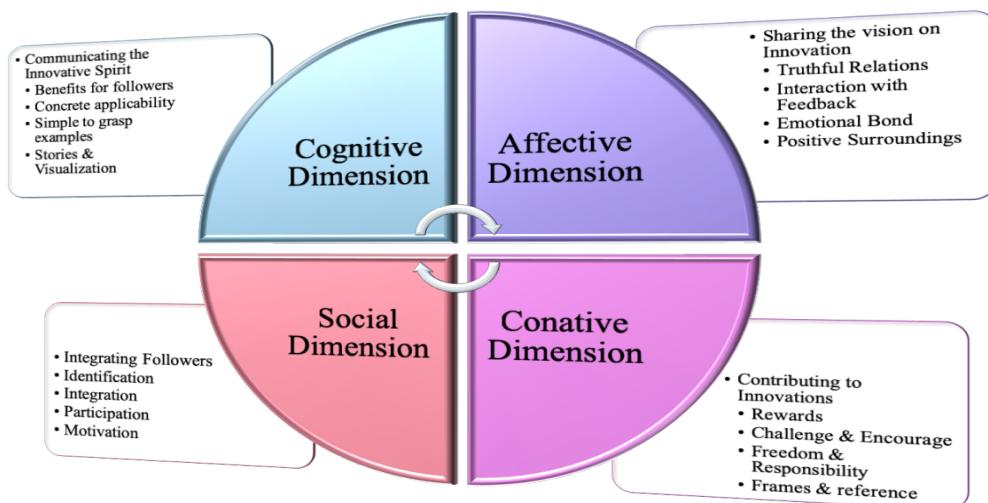


Figure 2
Wheel of leadership communication on innovation (Zerfass & Huck, 2007)

As employees are considered one of the most important sources of innovation, changing the management framework is important for implementing an innovative culture through internal communication (Linke & Zerfass, 2011).

Internal communications exist within a company and among employees. For example, emails, face to face conversations, memorandums and formal meetings. Conduit and Mavado (2001) identified that the main benefits of internal communication are to increase productivity, improve product and service quality, enhance levels of innovation and reduce costs.

Instead of a linear change, as the theoretical model implies, there were simultaneously different levels of identification in the company's culture. One typology summarized the corresponding perceptions of the culture of innovation: the culture of innovation, the pioneers of innovation, mediocrity, stopping and refusing. Significant correlations between identification and environments underlined the importance of internal communication. The purpose of communication managers should be to lead employees through the identification phases, specifically targeting their identification levels and using the appropriate media to address the results.

The developed framework helps as a management tool for evaluating the way employees perceive the messages of an innovation philosophy and internal media. By linking

internal, innovative and changing communication, it identifies new key aspects for creating a communication mix and specific communication with the target group. The effectiveness of communication is influenced by the overall quality of internal communication during the process of service innovation. The communication quality is measured based on the information that can be understood by the receiver, for example the project teams, in a timely manner.

Two of the values that are beneficial to the innovation process are stability and change. These will always be in conflict, but it is a desired conflict. As they are not mutually excluding values, moreover, they are complimentary. Social communication promotes innovation, creativity and dynamism and has the power to balance out change and stability. These two values also have an important role in preventing rigidity and fostering flexibility. Another important relation that needs to be cultivated is the creative relation between economic and technical communication, management communication and cultural communication. This can be achieved through an efficient social communication that will prevent unnecessary tension. In this triangle, cultural communication encourages change processes, while management and economical and technical communication bring stability into the equation. This is a blend that should be addressed and more pay more attention to it, as it can create the right environment for innovation and, further down the line, boost cooperation and productivity (Johannessen & Olsen, 2011).

Strategic communication alongside a new perspective of leadership communication and organizational culture, can promote inside a company the so-called "innovative culture" and boost the chances of survival of the innovation. This will also contribute to overcome the barriers and challenges during the innovation process. Therefore, the communication professionals' role should become broader and more complex in order to achieve the success chances of an innovation process and facilitate that 'the potential for change' in complex dynamical settings is enhanced. It becomes a circular model that integrates the social, cognitive, affective and cognitive dimensions of this new extensive role of communication in the innovation process.

Communication in the context of innovation processes needs to go beyond the area of traditional tactics of communication in order to ensure efficient and beneficial interactions among all internal and external stakeholders and achieve a higher success rate of the advancement processes. These models open new realms for the theory and practice of strategic communication. According to management theory, strategic efforts are characterized by their contribution to the basic factors of success. Strategic communication shapes meaning, builds trust, builds reputation, and manages in the order of symbolic relationships with internal and external actors to support organizational growth and ensure freedom to operate (Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). Through this, strategic communication prepares organizations for an uncertain future - in contrast to public relations whose efforts support current business and activities. Innovation communication thus, becomes an integral part of strategic communication and the next step is to analyze in detail recent innovation management concepts and promising measures to promote innovation in everyday interactions.

According to the study conducted in Germany, INNOVATE 2006 (Huck, 2006) two thirds of the communication experts interviewed stated a higher presence in organizational communication of the concept of innovative communication compared to 2004 (62.5%). This reflects that more attention is being given to communication in the innovation context as the benefits can be seen in various areas of the process.

This paper has managed to paint just a broad picture of how communication strategy can bring benefits inside the company in the context of innovation. Further research is requiring a better understanding of the particularities of different industries and companies' approach and dynamic during this process. Another direction, that is worth being explored, is

the way corporate communication outside the company can increase the success rate of the innovation process. This can include aspects not only related to the messages, stakeholders, timing but also to the positive outcome in the talent recruitment process, that is much needed in innovation, as well as customer communication and brand positioning.

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ARE WE THERE YET? AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF THE ROMANIAN ENTREPRENEURS' ICT LITERACY

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Abstract. *The rapid evolution of information and communication technology (ICT) is generating fast-paced urbanization of the cities with considerable changes in physical, social and economic areas. This is the case of the “smart cities”, conceptualized for our purpose as complex socio-cognitive systems that are permanently exposed to new resources that need to be integrated and converted in economic wealth and citizenship well-being outputs). The transition from “traditional” to “smart cities” is generated by the IT industry that is the most advanced domain related to smart urbanization. This progress has several benefits for the profit of modern companies, but it puts a lot of pressure on other key systems in the communities. Thus, we build our case on a cross-disciplinary view and we aim to analyse the level of ICT literacy held by Romanian entrepreneurs, and we further aim to develop a simulation that explores the cognitive and affective dynamics of collaboration, involving real-time interactions between multiple parties with divergent interests. Based on these interactions, the communities within Cluj-Napoca have the opportunity to process and integrate all the resources available and convert them into sustainable and effective urbanization.*

Keywords: smart cities, entrepreneurship, collaboration, ICT, multiteam systems

Introduction

Now more than ever, information and communication technology (ICT) has become the main responsible trigger for urban growth. It intensively tailors the subsystems (e.g. social and technical stakeholders) of the cities shaping the economic wealth and the well-being of the communities and citizens (Richter, Kraus, and Syrjä, 2015; Curșeu, Semeijn, & Nikolova, 2020). Due to this high utilization of technology, cities experience a complex transition from “traditional” to “smart” principles. The ideal strategic vision of a city, nowadays, is the “smart” one. According to Holland (2008)’s review, the literature has designated the “smart” label to a city if the following three features are achieved: the city (1) uses the latest technologies in networked infrastructures in order to facilitate the social, cultural and urban development; (2) is a targeted place for entrepreneurial initiatives and corporations; (3) is strongly oriented on social and environmental sustainability. However, the research in this area is in its infancy and it requires more cross-disciplinary interest in order to disentangle the mechanisms that have the potential to enable effective urbanization of intelligent cities.

Theoretical framework

The reality now reflects a bright side generated by the corporate environment that increases the economic wealth of the cities, yet it reflects also a dark side due to the intensive use of ICT in all areas of the city that is very challenging for low literacy entrepreneurs, citizens and communities that are not equipped properly (for instance, elder people who need to buy a bus ticket from a ticket machine or by using a smart application; private sectors like hair salons or car washing and repair services etc.) that do not necessarily depend on technology to deliver their services at their best. The main question here is, for how long. How

long can the “traditional” entrepreneurs of small and medium-sized enterprises survive and make a profit with a low literacy of information and communication technology. In a digitized and fast-changing economic and socio-political system, successful entrepreneurship requires deep knowledge of e-commerce, e-banking, and e-learning (Hafezieh, Akhavan, & Eshraghian, 2011) in order to gain a competitive advantage.

As such, the parties of the city become more and more disconnected and to some extent in conflict, instead of growing together as a whole (the ideal vision of a smart city). On the one hand, the entrepreneurs are responsible for their learning and development in terms of delivering “smart” services, but on the other hand, this transition, from traditional to smart, urgently needs the support of new policies and strategies with high potential of integrating the needs and interests of all the subsystems existing in the smart city (Holland, 2008; Martin, Evans, & Karvonen, 2018). According to Pieroni and her collaborators (2018), a smart city is characterized by six features as follows:

- A smart economy that includes innovative entrepreneurship, flexible working policies, productivity, agile transformation
- Smart governance is reflected by participative decision-making.
- Smart people are characterized by the willingness of life-long growth and development, accountability, creativity, reliability, and diversity.
- Smart mobility is briefly defined as sustainable and proper infrastructure.
- Smart living with a focus on health and wellbeing.
- Smart environment determined by sustainable resources management.

For this research, we have selected smart economy, smart governance and smart people areas in order to analyze the particularities of the transition processes in Romania. In 2019, forty-five Romanian cities have been funded to carry out three hundred and thirty-three projects in all six areas mentioned above (www.start-up.ro, 2019). This year, the Ministry of European Funding launched eight funding programs with an investment of thirty-one billion (www.start-up.ro, 2020). Having such an increasing number of projects, the research question that arises is determined by the level of literacy of those cities: Are all of the sectors of those cities prepared to carry out and to successfully implement the funded projects?

In this regard, we aim to first explore the level of literacy of Romanian entrepreneurs who activate in different business areas and we also intend to provide a practical framework that may help the disconnected sectors of a city to collaborate in order to plan and implement a sustainable strategy for a digitalized location (Meijer and Bolívar, 2016; Holland, 2008, Martin et al., 2018). We build on a systemic approach and we conceptualize smart cities as complex socio-cognitive systems that acquire, process and convert the new technologies into outputs with high impacts on prosperity and well-being for their citizens and communities (Meijer and Bolívar, 2016). Definitely, not the big advance of ICT makes a city smart, but the knowledge and the collaboration between the various parties of the community that urgently needs to generate new policies in order to obtain effective and sustainable urbanization (Meijer and Bolívar, 2016). Recently, the research has started to be very oriented on the effects of intelligent urbanizations on the low-developed countries, cities, or communities that are ignored because they are not fully equipped and prepared to take part in this modern growth. Therefore, cross-border cooperation is seen as critical in these societal contexts and it is urgently needed to develop sustainable and effective urbanizations (Loures et al., 2018).

The main focus of this research project is to employ a cross-disciplinary perspective and to explore the level of knowledge and preparedness of Romanian entrepreneurs and analyze the interplay between the disconnected sectors (e.g. high literacy – individuals working in knowledge-intensive organizations and low literacy citizens and communities) of the city. The cooperation for urban growth is an illustrative case for what Social Psychology calls societal issues that are usually addressed by multiparty collaborative systems (MPS).

MPS are proper configurations composed of various stakeholders with different backgrounds, divergent interests and perspectives that come together to debate and solve a society's ill-defined problem (Curșeu and Schrijver, 2017). These participatory approaches are expected to increase the elaboration of sustainable solutions that serve as many interests as possible. Effective urbanization requires effective collaboration. "Smart cities" are "wired cities" (Holland, 2008) in which different sectors, like social and technical ones, are strongly connected and rely on one another. The biggest issue that arises in these cases is generated by the imbalances and high levels of diversity that characterize MPS (e.g. powerful corporations and marginalized communities). For instance, Cluj-Napoca is considered a becoming smart city due to the growing IT industry, but at the same time, it faces so many problems with the population located in Pat-Rât sector. The main concern of the city governors should be on how to tackle the problems of the city as a whole and not to address only the evolution of the ICT that brings profit for powerful stakeholders. In order to address the issues that Romanian cities are confronting during their processes of urban growth, we interviewed various Romanian entrepreneurs and asked them about their business strategies in an e-functioning world. The result of our explorative study helps us to develop a collaborative framework that can serve to the implementation of a simulation where parties with different expertise and high potential come together to debate and to provide a valuable plan for the social, economic and environmental sectors of a city. Being part of a system with intensive real-time interactions, the parties have the opportunity to find integrative policies and strategies for sustainable and effective urbanization (Curșeu & Schrijver, 2017).

Collaboration within and between organizations is an overused term. Everybody talks about collaboration as a desirable reaching point, but few know how to achieve it (Schrijver, 2006). Successful collaboration is the case of the parties that work with diversity, being able to identify and value the diversity of the parties involved in the system. However, collaboration often fails because of alliances, partnerships, or collusions (Schrijver, 2006; Vansina, Taillieu, and Schrijver, 1998; Gray & Schrijver, 2010) generated by power imbalances (Fleștea, Curșeu, & Fodor, 2017), stereotypes (Vansina et al. 1998) and anxieties (Gray & Schrijver, 2010). The effects of these strategies during the social interactions are rather detrimental to the quality of the collaboration process. Alliances and partnerships between powerful parties are strategies that ignore the marginalized subsystems. Unfortunately, these alliances are detrimental for sustainable policies and strategies since their focus is only on the benefits of ICT, neglecting the integration of ICT on social and environmental sectors (Holland, 2008) especially in communities that are not equipped properly. Collusive processes are common strategies applied for keeping the illusion of harmony, avoiding debates and ignoring diversity. In some systems it manifests in the case of anxious and powerless subsystems and other cases, it manifests in the case of the powerful city "managers" because they refuse to reveal their real interests (Gray & Schrijver, 2010). As such, the authenticity of the interactions is dramatically reduced and the aforementioned strategies determine relational conflict, distrust, lack of psychological safety, and the ultimate and the most important effect is the poor-quality decisions for the urbanization.

This research relies on the "research in action" approach (Schrijver, 2006) and it is the first one that explores the interplay between social and technical components of a smart city in a Romanian context. As such, its applicability is highly relevant for our cities that are in the transition process from a "traditional" to a "smart city". The general goal of this type of simulation is to explore and understand the cognitive and emotional dynamics of collaboration within a multiparty system, composed of stakeholders with divergent interests and backgrounds. The researcher has a two-fold role: as an expert in analyzing the collected data (interviews, observations, and psychological metrics) and as a facilitator for the collaborative system (interventions only in the introduction and debriefing parts). This paper

is focused on the first part of our complex project that intends to analyze the level of literacy possessed by Romanian entrepreneurs.

Methodology

In order to respond to the latest calls in the literature that draw the attention of the researchers about the relatively little focus on the sustainable social component of smart cities (Carvalho et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2018), we take a cross-disciplinary perspective and we build this exploratory study on a mixed-method approach (interview and survey). We interviewed and distributed a survey to 133 Romanian entrepreneurs (mean age 37.6 years, SDage = 10.05, mean entrepreneurship experience = 8.6 years) from a wide range of work domains as follows (Table 1):

Variable	N	%
Gender	131	100%
Female	39	29.3
Male	92	69.2
Educational Background	133	100%
Professional School	2	1.5
High school	32	24.1
College	4	3
Bachelor Degree	47	35.3
Master Degree	38	28.6
Doctor of Philosophy Degree	8	6
Business Areas	133	100%
Blockchain	1	0.8
Commerce	34	25.6
Design and Art	6	4.5
E-commerce	2	1.5
IT	16	12
Manufacturing	8	6
Marketing	4	3
Services	60	45.1

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

***Notes:** Services label includes – consulting, beauty salon; Commerce includes sales, shops, restaurants

Measures

In order to explore the level of ICT literacy possessed by Romanian entrepreneurs, we took cryptocurrency as a reference point and we explored their vision on cryptocurrency usage. The dataset includes various questions regarding strategic decision-making, finance knowledge, cryptocurrencies. For this study, we were particularly interested in the following aspects:

1. To what extent cryptocurrencies do the entrepreneurs perceive cryptocurrencies as opportunities and threats (7 questions). Example of question: Cryptocurrency fosters business growth and creates new business opportunities. The participants evaluated every item on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 is Totally Disagree and 5 is Fully Agree.
2. To what extent do the entrepreneurs understand finance terms? (5-point Likert scale, where 1 is Very Little and 5 is Very Well)
3. How many types of cryptocurrencies do the entrepreneurs know? We identified the types of cryptocurrencies through content analysis and we quantified them.

Results

Variable	N (133)	Mean	SDmean
1. Finance literacy	122	3.7	0.7
2. Cryptocurrency as opportunity	133	2.6	0.9
3. Cryptocurrency as threat	133	2.7	0.8

Table 2. Entrepreneurs' literacy

Based on the interview responses provided by the participants, two researchers analyzed the literacy level of the entrepreneurs. The agreement index $Kappa = .84$, $p < 0.001$ indicates a slight agreement between rates. Therefore, we will show both distributions of the results (Figure 1 and Figure 2):

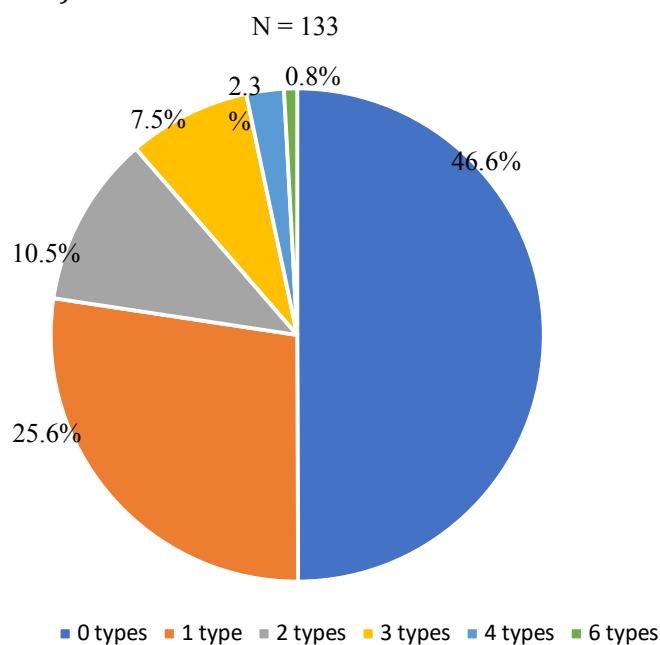


Figure 1. Entrepreneurs' Cryptocurrency literacy Rater 1

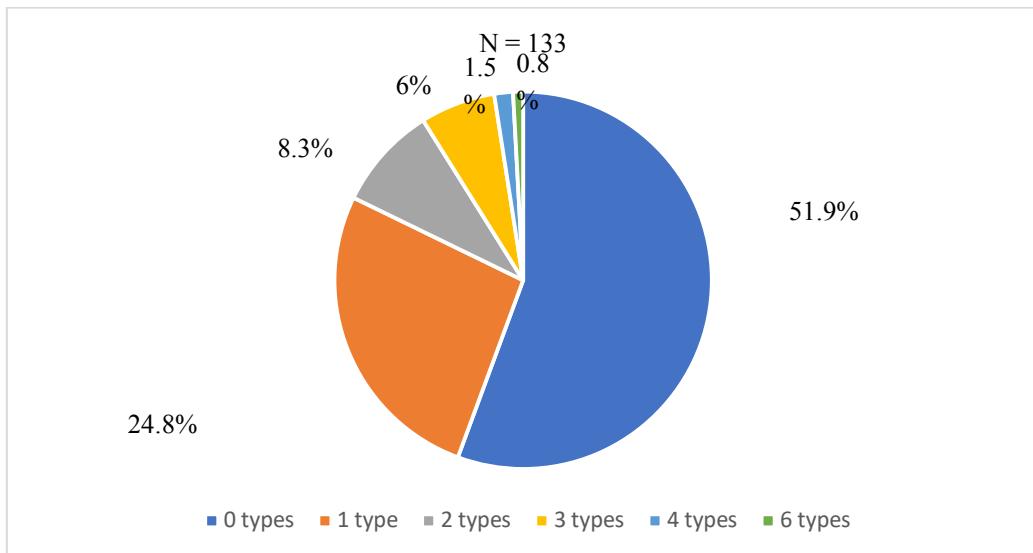


Figure 2. Entrepreneurs' Cryptocurrency literacy Rater 2

The descriptive results show that about 70% of our respondents have low or no literacy at all regarding the types of cryptocurrencies. Cryptocurrency is a general name for all encrypted decentralized currencies, *bitcoin* being the most common one (Goycochea, 2019, Penn State University website). The finance literacy possessed by our respondents, with a mean entrepreneurship experience of 8.6 years, is at a medium level (Table 2). The results presented in Table 2 show that cryptocurrencies are perceived as opportunities on the one hand, but also as threats on the other hand.

To interpret our results, we analyzed the scientific papers published so far and we also explored the important economic websites and papers. The low literacy of ICT possessed by entrepreneurs can be explained by the perceived risks. In terms of cryptocurrencies, volatility, trust and safety are the main causes of avoiding using a digital token. Some of the excerpts support this perspective as follows: “[...] in my opinion, I don't think that pubs' owners will invest in BitCoins or any other digital token. I think the only ones who can reap the benefits by investing in this digital system are The Wall Stress investors. In my opinion, we are not ready to change our economy in cryptocurrency.”

Discussion

The main goal of our work is to facilitate the collaboration between low and high literacy social actors to successfully integrate the advances of ICT in such a way that it would enhance the development of various subsystems. Currently, the critical transition of Romanian cities reflects the situation in which the IT industry experiences economic wealth and well-being, while the other sectors struggle with their careers, companies and well-being (Curșeu et al., in press). In order to facilitate this collaborative situation, we wanted to explore the real situation of the entrepreneurs' literacy in order to develop a simulation in which multiple stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, modern companies, non-governmental organizations, citizens) come together to debate and find integrative solutions that serve the needs and interests as many stakeholders as possible. Following the basic principles of a collaborative system (Schrijver, 2006), our simulation intends to provide the proper setting for exploring and understanding the cognitive and affective mechanisms that connect or divides the subsystems within the city. The results of both parts of the complex study (the explorative part and the simulation-intervention part) serve various purposes such as:

(1) supporting the parties and relevant stakeholders of the smart city with empirical explanations about their attitudes, behaviors or affective experiences;

(2) helping the researchers to better understand the cognitive and affective dynamics emerging in the system;

(3) generating new insights for research and practice about the effectiveness of collaborative tasks. Concerning the particular case of Cluj-Napoca, the simulation can provide a suitable setting for the delegates of various subsystems to meet and debate the “urban growth” issue.

The structure of the simulation is based on an elaborated scenario about the issue of fragmented sectors within the city and involves real-time interactions within and between the parties involved. The simulation (lasting approximately eight hours) starts with a brief introduction about the issue, the schedule of the simulation and the interaction rules. Afterward, the parties engage into planning and strategy-making interaction within their group (thirty minutes). This part is meant to help them to act later on in the simulation. In the subsequent phases, the parties are involved in “Visiting” and “Town Hall” meetings. The “Visiting” refers to meeting with other parties (up to three parties in the same place), while the “Town Hall” meeting refers to bringing together, at the same table, delegates from every party in order to debate the task at hand. At the end of the day, all the parties engage in a debriefing session, facilitated by the researchers. Initial strategies, performances, but also experienced feelings and cognitions are in-depth discussed. The psychometric assessments (questionnaires) are administered after the first ingroup meeting (to evaluate the assumptions and expectations) and after each “Town Hall meeting” (to capture the dynamics at various time points). The intensive measures are designated to assess the emergence and dynamics of socio-affective states (e.g. conflict, minority dissent, trust, cohesion, psychological safety etc.), social structures (the level of integration and differentiation of collective cognition and social networks within the system) and collective competences (e.g. collective cognitive and emotional intelligence; collective rationality; collective resilience etc.). These emergent affective and cognitive states are proximal outputs that ultimately, influence the quality of new policies and strategies that needs to be implemented in the smart city. The results of the simulation are expected to provide insights into the cognitive and affective dynamics within the collaborative system. The multiple paradoxes that characterize the MPS generate particular dynamics for every simulation. However, the high levels of diversity in a system with fragmented sectors that should be connected are expected to generate relational conflict, power imbalances or distrust. Based on these findings, we can provide empirical evidence to the city’s managers and provide new insights about successful collaboration for effective urban growth.

We plan to run the simulation multiple times with various stakeholders having divergent interests (e.g. local authorities, entrepreneurs, CEOs, citizens, delegates from different associations and non-governmental organizations, delegates from marginalized communities). In this way, we have the opportunity to capture the dynamics within the whole city. The complex data analysis has the potential to provide valuable information about the interconnected networks in Cluj-Napoca and their influences on one another. Moreover, we aim to provide essential information about the factors that inhibit or enhance collaboration among these parties or networks and what are the best practices for their multiparty collaborative systems in order to achieve effective urban growth.

Conclusion

This research has various implications for the societal issues that Cluj-Napoca and Romania face during the transition from “traditional” to “smart” urbanization. The IT industry has received a lot of attention and appreciation in the city being the most important factor that contributes to the economic wealth of the city. But this bright side has come with adverse effects because the “new” city does not integrate the non-IT sectors. Therefore, our research is highly determined to respond to this societal problem, the urban development of Cluj-Napoca.

As such, it has implications on different levels and to various domains. First, this project is the first one that addresses empirically and practically this societal issue in the Romanian context. Our findings may stand for the other complex problems existing in our country. In addition, due to the high applicability of the research, the project could connect the academic environment to the other communities that co-exist in our smart city. Second, the valuable results can be published and connected to the global situations of urbanizations. Therefore, it can bring important collaborations with organizations and universities from other countries. Finally, our findings can provide new pathways and effective mechanisms of collaboration for developing sustainable urban growth. In this way, the local authorities and the stakeholders in the city can learn new practices of collaboration for future projects.

Acknowledgements:

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THE ROMANIAN ECONOMY, A COMPONENT PART OF THE EU ECONOMY IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF THE COVID-SARS PANDEMIC 19

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Abstract: The current global economic situation, of the EU and implicitly of the Member States, is strongly shaken by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Romania's economy as an EU member state, like the other world economies, registered a major shock, with negative socio-economic implications, which will lead to a large recession, to a much more serious economic crisis than that recorded in the period of 2007-2009. The possibilities and dynamics of revitalization and revival of the economy of the Member States and Romania, will depend on several factors, such as the evolution of the pandemic in EU countries, the identification and implementation of economic stabilization policies tailored to the needs and particularities of each country's response to their application. The strong link and interdependence between the economies of the EU Member States should not be ignored, which would lead to a positive or negative chain reaction depending on their evolution in the economic recovery process.

Keywords: economic policy, economic growth, recession, unemployment, inflation

Introducere

În contextul actual al Pandemiei COVID situația economică la nivel mondial, al Uniunii Europene și național s-a înrăutățit în mod substanțial. Pentru statele membre ale UE, pandemia a produs un soc care se propagă în lanț asupra tuturor țărilor. Datorită legăturii care există între țările Uniunii Europene la nivelul producției de mărfuri, a exportului și importului de produse, materii prime, servicii, declinul economic se păstrează în lanț iar redresarea va varia în mod diferit de la o țară la alta în funcție de particularitățile fiecărei țări, de structura economiei și de politicile economice care vor fi adoptate. Consecințele actualei situații, nu are doar consecințe grave asupra situației economice ci și la nivel social cu implicații multiple, ceea ce ar conduce la o criză mondială fără precedent care ar putea fi depășită foarte greu.

Studiu de caz

În România, economia din ultimii ani a avut un trend crescător, dar nu suficient pentru a înregistra o creștere economică care să se reflecte în calitatea vieții și a nivelului de trai al populației. Importurile au depășit exporturile, ceea ce este considerat a fi un aspect negativ a evoluției economiei României.

Conform datelor analizate, România ar fi trebuit să înregistreze o creștere economică de 4,1% în anul 2019, în condițiile unui indice al inflației de -4,04% (limita admisibilă impusă de UE este de -3%) a unei rate a șomajului de 3,9%, conform BIM destul de mică dar cu un deficit comercial al contului curent de -4,7% din PIB.

Conform programei Comisiei Europene referitoare la evoluția economiei României în anul 2020, se preconizează că va înregistra un procent de scădere de - 6% față de alte țări membre ale UE ca: Franța (-8,2%), Ungaria (-7%), Germania (-6,5%), Italia (-9,5%). Aceste lucru înseamnă că România în contextul actual al pandemiei are ceea mai mică cădere economică decât a celorlalte state europene, ceea ce va însemna o redresare lentă. Este posibil

ca zguduitura regresiunii economice să fie simțită mai târziu, nu în acest moment, fapt care ar determina o creștere economică neconșistentă, iar ameliorarea economiei și relansarea acesteia, va fi cu siguranță mult mai înceată.

Economiile țărilor din regiune, mai puțin dezvoltate, vor fi mai puțin afectate decât economiile țărilor dezvoltate, posibil datorită fatului că sunt economii conexe, complementare, de subproducție. Astfel, PIB-ul Poloniei este în scădere (- 4,1%), Cehia (- 6,2%), Ungaria (- 7%).

Situată comparativă la nivelul câtorva țări ale Uniunii Europene, comparativ cu România privind evoluția PIB- anii - 2020-2021 se prezintă astfel:

Țara	România	Bulgaria	Ungaria	Cehia	Polonia	Franța	Germania	Italia
Evoluția în anul 2020	-6%	-7,2%	-7%	-6,2%	-4,1%	-6,5%	-8,2%	-9,5%
Evoluția în anul 2021	+4,2%	+6%	+6%	+5%	+4,1%	+5,9%	+7,4%	+6,5%
Procentul de redresare rămas	-1,80%	-1,20%	-1,00%	-1,20%	0,00%	-0,60%	-0,80%	-3,00%

Tabelul 1. O analiză comparativă a evoluției PIB-ului în anii 2020-2021 din România

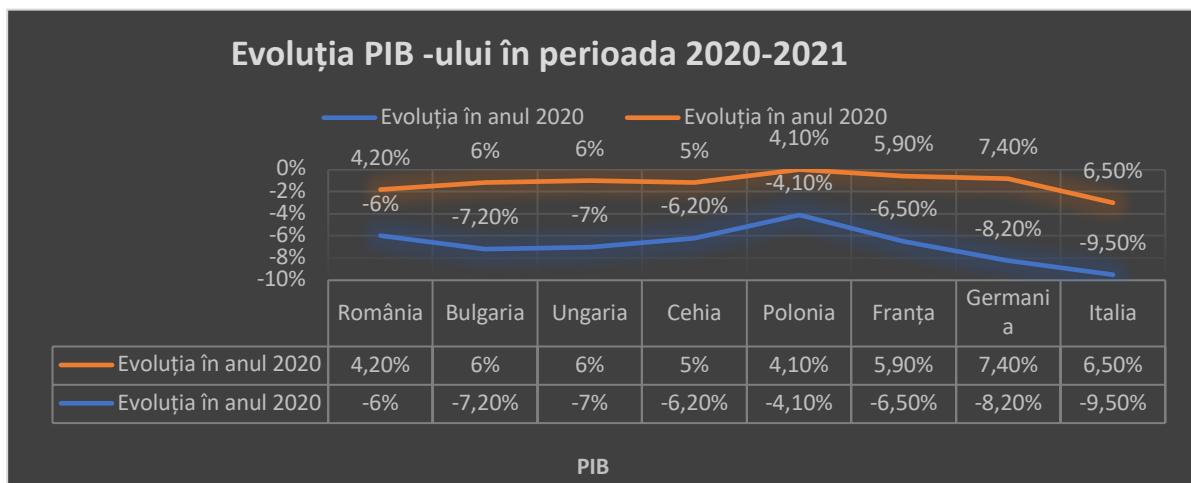


Figura 1. Evoluția PIB-ului în perioada 2020-2021

Se observă că România are un avantaj față de celelalte economii ale statelor membre ale UE cu diferențe semnificative: 2% față de Ungaria, 2,2% față de Germania, 3,5% față de Italia. Nu trebuie uitată dimensionarea economiilor acestor țări, care devansează în mod avansat economia țării noastre. După cum se poate observa, ritmul de redresare al economiei României este mult mai lent decât a celorlalte țări, cu excepția Italiei, care are cel mai mare procent negativ al PIB-ului.

Analistii economiști din cadrul Comisiei Europene au afirmat că economia României va înregistra o contractare cu 6% în anul 2020, un deficit bugetar de 9,2% din PIB. Guvernul României previzionează o creștere negativă a PIB-ului de -1,9%, un deficit bugetar de 6,7% din PIB. Acest lucru se poate datora și creșterii pensiilor cu peste 40% pe lângă numărul mare de pensionari. Actualul sistem de susținere a contribuției la sistemul de pensii este deficitar, fără capacitate operativă și de colectare de la cei aflați în câmpul muncii, care sunt în număr mult mai mic.

Având în vedere impactul pandemiei Covid-19 asupra economiei României, Guvernul a prevăzut efectul recesiunii ca fiind între -1% și -3%. Banca Mondială (BM) l-a corectat către -

3,8 % iar Fondul Monetar Internațional a estimat un procent de -5% în anul 2020. Se speră ca după acest declin să urmeze o creștere economică de 3,9% în anul 2021. Un alt sector destul de afectat va fi piața muncii care va suferi un dezechilibru major. Rata șomajului va ajunge în anul 2019 la 3,9% iar în anul 2020 la 10,1 % urmând să se diminueze până la 6% în anul 2021 (Neagu, 2020).

Concluzii

Situația actuală nu este o criză economică "standard", ca rezultat al unor dezechilibre financiare, așa cum a fost criza economică din anii 2008-2009. Astfel, nu trebuie să ne raportăm la ceea ce a fost, ci trebuie să privim în perspectivă, la ceea ce va fi după această perioadă "post-coronavirus" – economia și societatea. Actuala criză economică-corona, ne-a găsit cu deficit bugetar destul de mare și a culminat cu solicitarea de reexaminare a bugetului pentru 2019.

La nivel global, nu s-au identificat soluții standard care să funcționeze, dar pot fi sprijinite instrumente comune, mai ales la nivelul UE, în cadrul căreia, economiile țărilor membre au un grad ridicat de integrare, fapt care conduce către armonizare și mix național adecvat între politicile fiscale, bugetare și politicile monetare.

Ca și posibile soluții de relansare sub aspectul discuțiilor ale economiei pot fi direcționate către câteva direcții:

- Criza de sănătate publică este foarte importantă și primordială. Rezolvarea acesteia ar conduce la scăderea incertitudinii și temei oamenilor, pe care aceștia o trăiesc când este vorba de viață și sănătatea acestora. Odată cu aceasta, oamenii ar fi plini de optimism și pozitivism, ceea ce ar permite relansarea cererii. Este un proces greu în actualul context și este nevoie de resurse financiare, umane și tehnologice pentru a duce această luptă cu Covid-19. Este foarte probabil ca problemele de sănătate publică să nu dispară foarte curând iar soluția medicală certă (vaccin și/sau tratament) să întârzie să apară. În aceste condiții, va trebui să învățăm să conviețuim cu acest coronavirus. De aceea vor trebui asigurate resursele financiare pentru ca infrastructura medicală, umană și tehnologică, să poată duce această luptă de anduranță psihologică împotriva Covid-19.

- O altă direcție ar fi aceea care vizează luarea unor măsuri de către Guvern fundamentate corect: obiective, transparente care să furnizeze soluții viabile mediului de afaceri și nu numai în vederea creșterii acestora. Investitorii vor iniția noi proiecte doar în momentul în care apar semne certe de revenire ale economiei. Astfel, este nevoie de finanțarea sectorului privat în primul rând prin asigurarea capitalului de lucru și apoi investiții de dezvoltare. Sustinerea IMM-urilor, a fermierilor, garantarea creditelor sunt foarte importante.

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E-GOVERNMENT – A STEP FOR PROGRESS OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORM IN ROMANIA. STUDY CASE- DASM CLUJ-NAPOCA

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Abstract. *The purpose of the paper is to present the e-government as a step for progress of local public administration reform in Romania. The paper presents the assessment of online services for the Social and Medical Assistance Directorate (DASM), Cluj-Napoca, using the case study method, the advantages of the online services, the advantages and disadvantages of the on-line services and the ways to improve online services.*

Previous research mentions that the public administration reform in Romania is a very complex process, influenced by many factors: political, economic, socio-cultural, technological factors. The evolution from a communist administrative system to different paradigms - NPM or NPG – in Romania is not an easy one. From March 2020 until now, local authorities have tried to adapt the services offered to citizens, ensuring the possibility of on-line services. The results of the study case about DASM Cluj-Napoca will offer information about the evolution of e-government – as a step of local public administration reform, in the actual context in Romania.

Keywords: public administration reform, NPM (New Public Management), NPG, e-government, on-line services

Introduction

The reason for choosing this theme for the paper is because e-government in the context of the COVID-19 pandemics is an essential element for assuring access for citizens to public services needed for improving the quality of their life. The originality of the paper is given by the fact that the assessment of e-government on this period has not been done for the Social and Medical Assistance Directorate (DASM) from Cluj-Napoca city.

The research questions for this case study are:

1. Is the e-government assuring easier access for citizens to the services offered by the local authorities – especially by DASM?
2. Does e-government determine an ascendant trend for citizens' trust in local authorities?
3. Is the e-government a tool for improving the quality and performance of public services offered by DASM?

Theoretical framework

The concept of e-government is „the use of technology to improve the access to administration services, distributing them to citizens and business environments. E-governance is seen as an innovation, a technological change of the link between governors and citizens, for increasing their satisfaction“ (Lupsan, Maftei, Bocaniala, Coman, 2011, p. 998).

E-government has been identified, since 1990, as an international indicator for New Public Management (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000, p. 18). The same authors mention that „rapidly developing information technologies could revolutionize public sector productivity, provide citizens with faster, better information and access to services and even participatory

democracy „, that e-government „reinforces traditional bureaucratic hierarchies“ and also that e-government „facilitate the NPM“ (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000, p. 7).

Defining e-government as a tool for New Public Management leads to consideration of the e-significant government's effects on the growth of more effective and highly functional services for citizens, with quicker access, despite public servants' work schedule or even the position of citizens seeking public services from local authorities. The European Union defines e-government as: „the use of Information And Communication Technologies (ICTs), in public administration combined with organizational change and new skills in order to improve public services and democratic processes and strengthen support to public policies“ (European Commission, 2003).

In Romania, according to *Digital Government Factsheet 2019 (Romania)*, has legislation related to digital government, especially for the side that needs to be implemented by local public authorities:

- Law no. 544/2001- on Free Access to Information – provide the „free and unrestrained access to information of public interest“.
- Emergency Ordinance no. 41/2016 – mention the obligation for public authorities, on request from citizens, to accept documents in electronic format.

The National Strategy for Digital Agenda for Romania – 2020- mentions the e-government as an area of action which aims to increase efficiency and reduce costs in the public sector by modernizing the administration. The strategy also establishes as an indicator for 2020: at least 35% of people use an e-government system (*The National Strategy for Digital Agenda for Romania 2020*).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on how people used technology to access and get social services from local authorities, as it was the only way to do so during March and April 2020. Previous research mentions that the public administration reform in Romania is an extraordinarily complex process, influenced by many factors: political, economic, socio-cultural, technological factors. The evolution from a communist administrative system to different paradigms - NPM or NPG – in Romania is not an easy one.

Furthermore, many studies on the topic of e-government are focused on citizen satisfaction with local government online services as well as citizen faith in local governments. Welch mentions in the research „*Linking Citizen Satisfaction with E-Government and Trust in Government*“ that: „the interaction between trust and satisfaction is recursive: trust leads to satisfaction and vice versa“ (Welch, Hinnant, Moon, 2004, p. 377). In Romania, more than 87% of municipalities offered some online services to citizens or companies, and most of them offered more than one (Urs, 2018, p. 128).

Methodology

In order to assess the progress of e-government made by the local authorities, especially by the Social and Medical Assistance Directorate (DASM), there were used different methods. Social and Medical Assistance Directorate is a public service, being a part of the Local Council of Cluj-Napoca City.

First, the website of Cluj-Napoca City Hall was analyzed and the website of the Social and Medical Assistance Directorate. On the first website - www.primariacluj.ro – are mentioned the online services – online payments on ghiseul.ro, scheduled weddings, payments for parking, online forms to plan the id card and also other 120 digital methods which can be very useful. The application MyCluj could also be used for suggestions and objections.

During the pandemic, social services were provided using an online form of ephone, WhatsApp, Zoom, and the new Cisco Webex Meeting, which was introduced in August 2020, in order to comply with local and central authorities' safety procedures.

For the research of e-government, a short questionnaire with 5 questions had been applied to the employees of DASM. The respondents' range in age, from 26 to 52 years old, a percentage of 77,7% are women, with university studies 44.4%, 22% master's degree and the other postgraduate studies.

Question No. 1: "How has the department's service to individuals been ensured?" 66% of respondents indicated the facilities were available online, while 33.3% said they were offered a mix of services.

Question No. 2: "Explain the benefits of using online services." The following benefits were mentioned by the respondents: social distance, being connected with the beneficiaries and their parents, the ability to continue the therapeutic program at home, preventing the beneficiaries from regressing, a simpler way to communicate with the clients, involving the parents or legal representatives in the therapy of the children with disabilities, and a flexible work schedule for the disabled children.

Question no.3: „Mention the disadvantages of using the services online.“

The respondents identify the following disadvantages for using social services online: the efficiency of the recovery program is not the same, the online is a cold and distant approach, you only send and get documents and not knew directly the person who sends them, repeated sending of documents and phone discussions to complete the necessary documents for accessing the services, work hard because some of the citizens do not have technical skills, equipment problems, technical difficulties, the therapist depends by the action done at home by the parents of children with disabilities, loss of the quality in social services, overburdening of the parents and also that results are difficult to be assessed.

Question no. 4: „Do you think that assuring the services online, contributes to quality growth of the services offered by DASM?“

The percentage the same for all three responses: no, I do not know, and others. The respondents indicated the following under "other": online services determine quality only for select DASM-assured services, online is not for social services, and online-only provides the ability to work for the center/local government institution.

Question No. 5: "On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you think the citizens' level of confidence in DASM's social services is?" 55.5% of respondents feel that residents have a medium degree of confidence in DASM's social services, while 22.2% have a high level of trust, and the rest of the respondents did not react to the question.

Conclusions

After analyzing the online services from the Social and Medical Directorate and also the website of the institution, we can answer the research questions:

Is the e-government assuring easier access for citizens to the services offered by the local authorities – especially by DASM?

Citizens have simpler access to digital services, but according to the downsides of online services noted by respondents, this access is impacted by citizens' equipment, technical skills, as well as the needs of people who demand social services from local authorities, many of whom are from marginalized communities.

Does e-government determine an ascendant trend for the trust of the citizens in local authorities?

According to the responses gathered from DASM workers, people's belief in DASM's social services is increasing, although there is no major change in the evolution of citizens' trust in social services. The trust is, like it is mentioned before in the paper, related to the satisfaction of the citizens, because if you are satisfied with the services that you access from local authorities, you will have more trust in the local authority and their employees.

Is the e-government a tool for improving the quality and performance of public services offered by DASM?

According to the answer of the employees, the quality of public services grew only for some services from DASM. According to the employees, those who work with children with disabilities said that is not an ascendant trend regarding the quality because the therapies done online have not the same quality.

The e-government can be seen as a tool for the progress of public management reform in Romania, but there are many things to do, in order to see the positive results that can be obtained with e-government, at the local and central level in Romania.

E-government in the local authority of DASM has a fast evolution, especially in the last months of 2020 but is necessary an exceptionally good collaboration between the authorities and the citizens: this collaboration needs particularly good technological skills, technological types of equipment, clear procedures regarding online services. The resources should be used properly for assuring courses for improving the citizen's skills to use online services and websites and to assure the necessary equipment.

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ONLINE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION DURING THE 2020 MARCH-MAY PANDEMIC EMERGENCY STATUS IN ROMANIA

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Abstract. This paper is about strategic institutional communication during the pandemic state of emergency in Romania. The author of this paper will analyze the communication made by the President of the country, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Strategic Communication Group. The main communication channel analyzed was represented by the Facebook pages of the four institutions. Some of the elements analyzed were the number of reactions, comments, distributions, the type of posts but also the way people perceived them. In the introduction, the author of this paper talks about social media and how the strategic institutional communication from the beginnings of social media until now. The research method applied is the questionnaire, conducted on a group of young people aged between 18 and 24 years. In conclusion, the author of this paper will highlight the way in which the institutional strategic communication was perceived in the analyzed period, March-May 2020.

Keywords: Coronavirus, Pandemic, Romania, President, Health, Communication

Introducere

Acest studiu evidențiază modul în care a fost percepută comunicarea strategică instituțională realizată de cele patru instituții – Președintele României, Klaus Iohannis; Ministerul Sănătății; Ministerul Afacerilor Interne și Grupul de Comunicare Strategică – în perioada stării pandemice de urgență, între 9 martie – 22 mai, pe canalul de comunicare reprezentat de paginile de Facebook ale instituțiilor. Scopul lucrării îl reprezintă intenția de a clarifica importanța comunicării strategice în perioade de criză, dar și de a vedea modul în care oamenii percep comunicarea strategică și cât de ierarhizată este aceasta.

World Wide Web, soluție de rețea limitată cu începuturile sale în 1991, era foarte limitat în utilizare datorită capacitaților digitale din acea perioadă, dar și din pricina răspândirii restrânsă și de numărul mic de persoane care au înțeles nevoia de a participa în mod activ la faza de implementare, de creare a conținutului necesar pentru dezvoltarea Web-ului. Social media este instrumentul care a resetat zeci de ani de evoluție umană către o societate mai deschisă, transformând-o într-o societate digitalizată, fără foarte multă interacțiune reală, în care singurătatea voluntară, un fenomen psihologic care era considerat tulburare psihică, este acum din ce în ce mai des întâlnită. În cele din urmă, social media ajunge să fie o „modalitate conversațională, care poate fi distribuită, de generare, diseminare și comunicare de conținut între comunități” (Ali, 2017).

Social media este parte din ceea ce numim web 2.0, fiind motorul care a schimbat considerabil maniera în care comunicăm și interacționăm cu cei din jur. Dacă în cazul web 1.0 există puțini creatori de conținut, iar majoritatea utilizatorilor sunt doar consumatori (Cormode, G., & Krishnamurthy, B., 2008), în era web 2.0, comunicarea nu mai este atât de unidirecțională. În ceea ce privește ierarhia rețelelor sociale, Facebook are o cotă de piață de 2,3 miliarde de utilizatori, dar începând cu 2018, nevoia de platforme de socializare niște continuă să crească (Bailey, 2018). Social media răspunde nu doar la întrebarea „ce face X?”, ci

și la „cum mai este X?”. Odată cu creșterea numărului de creatori de conținut crește și nevoia de curatori sau mecanisme curative, pentru a verifica într-o oarecare măsură lucrurile ce ajung să fie posteate pe Internet (Harvey, 2018).

Din ce în ce mai multe domenii înteleg relevanța social media, cum ar fi jurnalismul, politica, sănătatea, psihologia, educația, cercetarea, dar și inteligența artificială. Social media nu doar că a schimbat modul în care comunicăm și interacționăm între noi, dar are puterea să destrame legături sau să dezmință credințe, totul în funcție de cum este administrată pagina, de aceea cei din spatele ei trebuie să fie îndeosebi atenți pentru a nu isca scandaluri mediatizate în online (Edward, 2014).

Comunicarea strategică

Comunicarea strategică presupune existența unei relații de cauzalitate între activitățile de comunicare și finalizarea obiectivelor organizației (Potter, 1999). Sintagma de „comunicare strategică” a devenit cunoscută publicului larg îndeosebi în anii 1920, fiind folosită inițial în guverne și armată (Freberg, 2019). Comunicarea strategică reprezintă o acumulare de metode concentrate pe corelații, stabilind noi linii pentru analize interdisciplinare. Astfel, comunicarea strategică reprezintă practicarea unei comunicări intenționate pe care un agent de comunicare o desfășoară public în numele unei entități, cu scopul de a atinge diverse obiective stabilite (Holtzhausen, 2013).

Comunicarea de criză se realizează ca o anexă a comunicării strategice (Eriksson, 2012). În comunicarea de criză există o colecție de practici care îi ajută în eforturile lor de a atinge o gamă largă de rezultate. Comunicarea de criză avansează în continuare și trebuie văzută ca o direcție critică a comunicării strategice. În acest sens, Mintzberg susține că „strategiile sunt atât planuri de viitor, cât și modele din trecut; strategiile nu trebuie să fie deliberate - pot apărea și ele; strategii eficiente se dezvoltă în tot felul de moduri ciudate; a gestiona strategia înseamnă a crea gândire și acțiune, control și învățare, stabilitate și schimbare” (Mintzberg, 1985). Utilizarea rețelelor sociale drept canal de comunicare în criză impune noi norme care trebuie respectate; drept exemplu, într-o perioadă era considerat necesar ca mesajele posteate pe Facebook să aibă o notă individuală, ele fiind cele care atrăgeau cel mai mult următorii paginilor.

Răspândirea activității în mediul online a avut un efect remarcabil în întreaga lume. De la a ajuta la interconectarea indivizilor până la a fi un impuls în acte caritabile, rețelele sociale schimbă continuu punctul de vedere și relația pe care oamenii o au cu mass-media, dar și între ei. Timpul petrecut în online, inclusiv comunicarea interpersonală, bloguri, materiale video, forumuri și altele, este utilizat pentru a realiza o comunicare unică, dar bidirectională între oameni, rețele și organizații.

Pentru analiza comunicării strategice instituționale în perioada stării pandemice de urgență pe teritoriul României, între 9 martie și 22 mai 2020, s-au folosit atât sondajul de opinie, prin chestionar, cât și studiul de caz. Chestionarul legat de percepția comunicării strategice efectuate de cele patru instituții: Președintele României, Ministerul Afacerilor Interne, Ministerul Sănătății și Grupul de Comunicare Strategică are 417 respondenți, dintre care 51% bărbați, iar 49% femei, cu vârste cuprinse între 18 și 24 de ani.

În al doilea rând, studiul de caz reprezintă o metodă de cercetare longitudinală, întrucât studiază și observă evoluția fenomenelor în decursul unei anumite perioade de timp. În cazul lucrării de față au fost analizate paginile Președintelui României, Ministerului Sănătății, Ministerului Afacerilor Interne și Grupului de Comunicare Strategică în perioada 9 martie – 22 mai 2020. Printre elementele observate se numără: numărul reacțiilor per postare, al comentariilor, distribuirilor, dar și clasificarea comentariilor în comentarii lăsate de femei sau de bărbați. Mai mult decât atât, vom observa și traectoria paginilor de la începutul stării de urgență până la finalul acesteia: cum a evoluat numărul aprecierilor și unde se situează pagina în raport cu celelalte.

Analiza comunicării strategice instituționale

Comunicarea strategică reprezintă instrumentul care ajută la facilitarea transmiterii informațiilor de către o instituție sau o asociație către un anume public țintă, cunoscut de la început, având ca scop transformarea mesajului într-unul înțeles de căt mai mulți oameni (Hallahan, 2007). Chestionarul aplicat a avut 35 de întrebări care vizează maniera în care au văzut respondenții comunicarea strategică realizată de către cele patru instituții: Președintele României, Ministerul Sănătății, Ministerul Afacerilor Interne și Grupul de Comunicare Strategică. Întrebările chestionarului au fost diverse, cu răspuns de tip alegere multiplă sau cu răspuns deschis; în prima parte au vizat comunicarea strategică cu privire la noul coronavirus, iar cea de-a doua parte s-a axat pe datele respondenților cu privire la mediul de proveniență, vârstă și ocupație. Numărul total al respondenților a fost de 417, 49% dintre ei fiind de sex feminin, iar 51% de sex masculin; totodată, respondenții se încadrează între 18-24 de ani, 78% dintre aceștia fiind studenți.

Întrebările la care tinerii au răspuns pot fi clasificate în mai multe categorii, cum ar fi *în ce mod comunicarea strategică a celor patru instituții pe tineri i-a determinat să respecte măsurile?, unde se situează aceștia privind sănătatea fizică/psihică în raport cu ceilalți?, care sunt lucrurile pe care le fac față de ceilalți pentru prevenirea coronavirusului?, informații personale*. E relevant faptul că acest chestionar subliniază că acum comunicarea strategică nu se mai realizează prin „viu grai”, ci cu precădere prin intermediul rețelelor sociale, care sunt din ce în ce mai digitalizate (Cmeciu, 2016).

Chestionarul efectuat are ca scop clarificarea mai multor aspecte ce țin de comunicarea realizată de cele patru instituții în această perioadă, și anume modul în care tinerii cu vârste cuprinse între 18-24 ani percep principalele informații transmise (măsuri și recomandări), căt de mult sunt influențați de către acestea, procentul în care instituțiile analizate sunt principalele sursele la care respondenții apelează în primă instanță în raport cu alte surse, cum ar fi presa, familia, prietenii, informațiile primite pe Whatsapp etc, dar și procentul în care tinerii consideră că fac mai multe lucruri pentru prevenirea noului coronavirus decât ceilalți. Totodată, putem observa faptul că oamenii se încred în informațiile care provin din surse oficiale (MAI și MS fiind principalele surse de informare pentru 93%, respectiv 87% dintre respondenți), dar și în informațiile cel mai ușor accesibile, adică știrile.

În ceea ce privește analiza de conținut, au fost analizate toate postările Grupului de Comunicare Strategică, Ministerul Sănătății, Ministerului de Afaceri Interne și Președintelui României din data de 9 martie 2020 și până în 22 mai 2020, pe toată perioada stării de urgență. Canalul de comunicare analizat a fost reprezentat de paginile de Facebook ale instituțiilor menționate.

Putem remarcă, în primă instanță, modul în care fluctuează numărul de postări de la o instituție la alta: în timp ce Președintele României, Klaus Iohannis, are nu mai mult de 50 de postări în această perioadă, Ministerul Sănătății a postat de aproximativ 500 de ori, acestea fiind cele două „extreme”. Postările lui Klaus Iohannis respectă criteriile impuse unei personalități politice în online, astfel că textele sale sunt echilibrate și ușor de înțeles, pentru a fi înțelese de căt mai mulți oameni (Enli, 2013). Majoritatea postărilor Președintelui au atât conținut text, căt și suport vizual, fie el fotografie sau videoclip. Ministerul Sănătății are nu mai puțin de 502 postări în această perioadă, iar majoritatea postărilor sunt de tip buletin de presă / informare de presă. Numărul reacțiilor este divers, unele postări având mii de aprecieri, altele poate chiar și 10 sau 15 aprecieri.

Ministerul Afacerilor Interne a însumat în perioada dată 472 postări, având relativ cele mai puține reacții/postare, dar și cele mai puține reacții negate. Sunt prezente comunicate și informări de presă, dar și diverse videoclipuri cu recomandări, de exemplu. Grupul de Comunicare Strategică a avut în această perioadă 287 postări, având, pe lângă buletinele și informările de presă, și postări mai diverse, în care mulțumeau eroilor din linia întâi sau vorbeau despre povestile lor, de exemplu.

Cele patru pagini s-au axat pe aceleași lucruri, abordându-le totuși în moduri diferite; dacă Ministerul Sănătății pune cel mai mare accent pe informația factuală, nu pe modul în care este ea prezentată, Președintele României preferă să aibă mai puține postări, dar scrise într-o manieră elevată, detaliată, fără greșeli de ortografie și cu diacritice. Unele postări ale paginilor se abat de la subiectul coronavirus, prezentând alte lucruri relevante la nivel de stat, dar majoritatea sunt în strânsă concordanță cu pandemia de coronavirus. Grupul de Comunicare Strategică are mai multe postări tip, cum ar fi cele cu Misiunile zilnice de salvare, prin care se fac cunoscute principalele misiuni de salvare din ziua precedentă; acest tip de postare are totuși destul de puține reacții. Dacă Grupul de Comunicare Strategică și Ministerul Afacerilor Interne apelează și la postări care sunt menite să „detensioneze” atmosfera creată de postările legate de coronavirus, paginile Președintelui și Ministerului Sănătății s-au rezumat doar la postări legate de pandemie. Tendința principală a oamenilor este să reacționeze mai pozitiv la postările mai puțin sobre, cum ar fi postările de tip întrebare-răspuns, de exemplu cele legate de vitamina C sau de tratamentele homeopate. Raportul femei-bărbați în ceea ce privește comentariile lăsate pe cele patru pagini este de 3:1. Totodată, este relevant și faptul că postările celor patru instituții aveau mai multe aprecieri la începutul pandemiei, decât spre mijlocul lunii mai, de exemplu; autorul acestei lucrări consideră că un asemenea comportament sugerează cât de însăși erau oamenii de informații la început, sete care s-a diminuat odată cu trecerea timpului.

Astfel, paginile instituțiilor au avut scopuri comune, în principal informarea oamenilor cu privire la numărul cazurilor de coronavirus în țară, transmiterea recomandărilor și noilor ordonanțe și legiferări. Deși au la bază aceleași informații, ce diferă este modul în care acestea sunt împachetate și livrate publicului. Toate postările celor patru instituții sugerează și întăresc ideea care susține că „comunicarea strategică devine vitală în propagarea reprezentării imaginii dorite” (Pînzariu, 2018), dar și faptul că fiecare instituție are nevoie de o comunicare strategică eficientă și organizată pentru a transmite mesajele dorite (Pînzariu, 2018).

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ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH AT UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION LEVEL

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Abstract. *The higher education vision is changing across Europe. In 2017, leaders of the European Union gathered at the Gothenburg Summit underlined once more the importance of creating common education spaces in order to develop networking, raise international competitiveness and increase the exchange of students and academic staff, among other subjects under discussion. Romanian universities are already competing at a global level to attract more students and funds in order to reach a better position in the education market. For public universities in Romania this represents a shift in mentality to a more entrepreneurial approach in a variety of activities.*

International mobilities represent an important academic indicator for performance at university level. To this end, educational institutions are allocating important resources to expand the numbers of beneficiaries, to increase the network of partners and to make the local academic brand more attractive.

In this paper, I would like to submit to attention a research concerning the most significant factors which influence students' decision in choosing a host university for their mobility or full-time studies. The data was gathered through a survey and four focus groups composed of international students at Babeş-Bolyai University. There were 116 respondents to the 2018 survey, 342 respondents to the 2019 survey and 60 participants to the focus groups organised at university level.

The purpose of the research is to adapt the way we promote the university academic offer taking into consideration the new academic market tendencies, approaching the international component from an entrepreneurial angle in order to achieve better results.

Keywords: higher education, international mobilities, Erasmus mobility

Introduction

Higher Education institutions have an important role in the evolution of society by offering quality services through academic activities, research, civic involvement, international networking etc. Universities change alongside society, thus being forced to adapt to all the transformations in the same rhythm, offering performant academic programs, important for the individual development of both employees and graduates. The reorganization and evolution of universities represent necessary activities that should be performed continuously as society is changing, forcing educational institutions to cope faster with such changes.

The European strategy for education has refocused in the last five years, targeting more cooperation between universities, integrated long-term joint academic programs, joint research activities and exchange programs. The role in society and its evolution is increasing for higher education institutions, as education and research are fundamental for different other European strategies. In 2017, during the Gothenburg Summit, the importance of creating common education spaces as a solution to tackle different academic challenges at the European level was underlined. There is a competition among higher education institutions to

join different prestigious networks in order to access European funds and to offer common educational spaces.

International cooperation between universities all around the world has a long tradition, being an important factor of academic development and generator of essential joint projects. The European education frame has changed a lot in the last 30 years as a result of the implementation of different European financial funding programs such as: Horizon 2020, Jean Monnet, Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Knowledge Alliances etc. Joint programs and research have become more a formality than an exception, as well as the fact that graduates have studied at least one semester abroad. As education changed, the opportunities offered to the academic staff and students increased considerably.

The number of mobilities and the implementation of the projects is important indicators in international rankings. The increase of international relations activities at universities' levels generates a different approach in university branding and marketing as there is a competitive educational market. Higher education institutions must adapt to new marketing trends in order to remain competitive and to increase the efforts put in developing branding strategies targeting a more private-sector approach than the one used until now. In order to cope with the new trends, higher education institutions have changed their strategies to be more attractive in the newly competitive market.

This paper is a result of a research that was generated by the need to find out how we can improve the dissemination strategy in order to adapt the promotional campaigns to the changing needs of the beneficiaries and thus attract more international students.

Literature review

Even though the research regarding the universities' marketing strategies is just starting to be attractive in academia, some studies approach this topic from different points of view.

There are several studies (Bruce, 1989; De Wit, 1995; Luttikholt, 1989; Waeraas & al. 2009; Cernicova & al., 2013; Mampaey & al, 2015; Lomer & al. 2018) that try to define the university branding and its increasing importance in making connections between the universities, networking, international relations, media, and community. Other studies correlated the brand notion at the university level, considering the students as clients, measuring their degree of attachment to a specific brand and their commitment to it (Dennis & Papagiannidis, Alamos, Bourlakis, 2016; Sramova, 2015). Kimberly M. Judson, Timothy W. Aurand, Linda Gorchels and Geoffrey L. Gordon analyzed the clarity of the message sent in order to build the university branding while other authors emphasize the fact that all employees must assume and identify with the brand (2008). Other authors (Bagautdinova et. al, 2015; Pavel, 2015, Judson et al., 2008) emphasize that the brand must be developed at an internal level and has to be promoted both internally and externally. The importance of university branding is more relevant in the global competition in recruiting students, especially when hundreds of universities participate at the same fair. Some authors (Ilieş, Fărcaş, 2013) highlight the importance of better strategies for promoting academic programs, teaching methods, and other academic aspects relevant to potential students.

Romanian universities are already deeply involved in the global competition for more students and funding that would enable them to gain a better position in the education market. Public universities in Romania have adapted their approach, incorporating an entrepreneurial framework in analyzing and constructing the marketing strategy at the international level.

Methodology

This paper is the result of a study conducted for two years having as the main purpose to analyze the degree of satisfaction of the incoming students at Babeş-Bolyai University, Romania, regarding the promotion channels, the dissemination tools, and the contents of

materials. The study had as a main priority obtaining relevant data in order to adapt the international recruiting strategy of the institution to the new tendencies.

The research tried to find answers to the following questions:

Q1. Which are the main factors that influence a student's decision in choosing the host university?

Q2. Are the factors changing from one year to another?

Q3. Is social media the best channel to promote the university's offer?

Q4. Which is the information most relevant for students when they are choosing their host university?

The answers to the questions mentioned above are important for creating a new marketing strategy to better promote the academic offer to potential students. The content and design of the promotional materials must be adapted to the actual needs taking into consideration several factors.

The data collected consisted of applying questionnaires and conducting focus group discussions with international students at Babeş-Bolyai University. The survey asked the participants questions regarding the factors that influenced their decision to study at Babeş-Bolyai University, they were asked to evaluate the dissemination tools that are currently used and to rank the social media that they use for information. During focus groups, students were asked to tell their opinions regarding the promotional materials that Babeş-Bolyai University is using at this moment and their experience in using them.

The data were collected in three phases: a survey applied in 2018 having 116 respondents, the same survey applied in 2019 with a number of 342 respondents and 4 focus groups with a total number of 60 participants. The research was conducted in three steps in order to see if there are major changes from one year to another in students' responses. The sample group was composed of the international students enrolled at Babeş-Bolyai University in the academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 studying in English, Romanian, Hungarian, German and French. Most of the respondents (74,18%) have ages between 18 and 25 years. As a country of origin, the respondents were from the European Union, USA, China, Israel, Moldova, Morocco, Jordan, Laos, Peru, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Cameroon, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Ecuador, Nigeria, Thailand, Vietnam, Tunisia, etc. The analysis of the level of the study showed that the target group was composed of 61,26% bachelor level students, 34,78% master students, 3,95% Ph.D. candidates.

The sample group for the first survey (2018) was composed of gender representatives: 54,35% female and 45,65% male. The students were enrolled as: Erasmus students from program country 39,22%, Erasmus students from partner country 25,49%, inter-university agreement 11,76%, Free mover students 3,92%, Romanian government scholarship holders 13,73% and self-sponsored students 5,88%, full degree students.

The sample group for the second survey (2019) was composed of gender representatives: 52,96% female and 47,04%. The students were enrolled as: Erasmus students from program country 64,50%, Erasmus students from partner country 12,21%, inter-university agreement 3,44%, Free mover students 0,76%, Romanian government scholarship holders 5,73% and self-sponsored students 12,60%, all of them full degree students.

Findings

This research had the purpose to analyze the dissemination channels, the relevance of the content of the promotional materials and the factors that motivate the students to choose a host university. The students' responses underlined again that students' decision is influenced by the prestige of the university, the teaching languages, and curricula. However, the study

generated a surprising result: the fact that the multicultural character of the city is more important than the university data. More interesting is the fact that this result was identically for both surveys. Another interesting aspect was the value of the fees which appears to be less important as it can be observed in the graphic below.

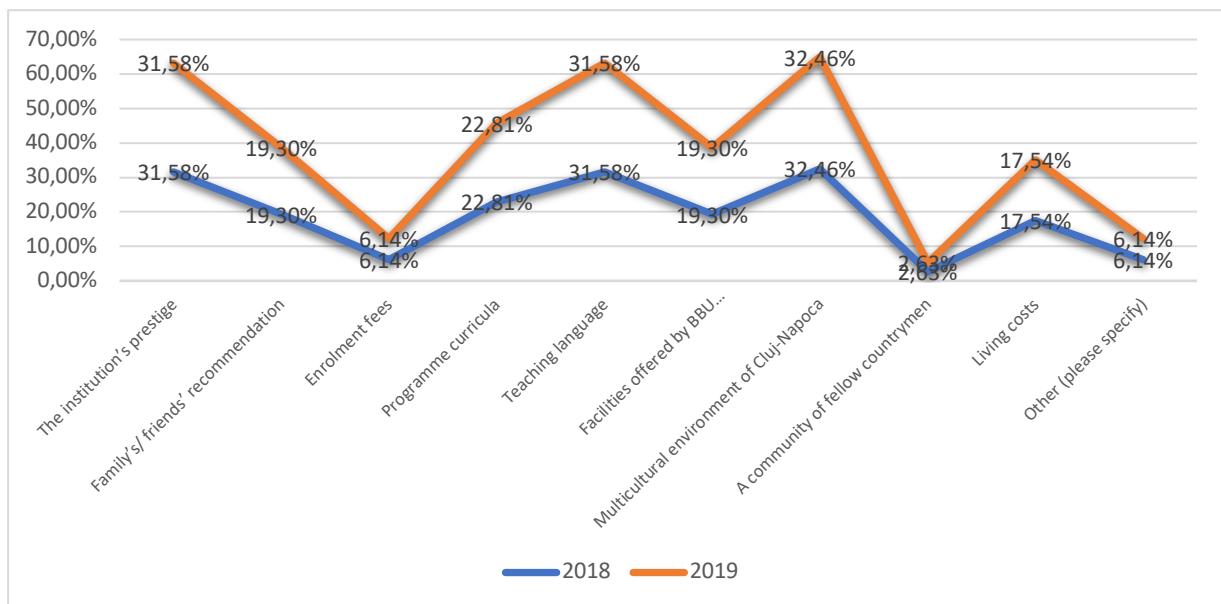


Figure 1. Answers to the question: What determined you to come study at Babeș-Bolyai University?

The analysis of the source of information highlighted the fact that the university website is the most important channel for dissemination of the information: 64,66% responses (2018), 71,93% responses (2019); followed by friends/acquaintances 44,83% responses (2018), 40,64% responses (2019); social media 14,66% responses (2018), 44,15% responses (2019); ads on students' groups 21,55% responses (2018), 18,13% responses (2019). It can be noticed that the highest jump in the information channels is regarding social media usage in choosing the host university.

Another objective of this study was to identify if students are interested in applying to recruitment agencies as they are more present on the educational market offering services in recruitment for students and promotion of the universities. The results underline the fact that most of the students do not prefer to use recruiting agencies. Just 3.45% (2018) and 2.34% (2019) have responded that they would prefer to use recruiting agencies.

Another objective was to see the degree to which the students are satisfied with our dissemination tools from the content and design point of view. The results, as presented in the table below, show that the students who declared to have used the tools are more satisfied than unsatisfied with them.

The promotional tool analyzed	I did not use	very good	good	so and so	not that much	not at all
Website Babes-Bolyai University	6.55%	15.17%	46.21%	15.17%	13.45%	3.45%
Website Centre for International Cooperation	27.93%	11.72%	38.97%	13.10%	6.90%	1.38%
Facebook Centre for International Cooperation	38.19%	12.85%	36.11%	7.64%	3.82%	1.39%

Facebook Erasmus	19.38%	24.91%	42.21%	10.03%	2.42%	1.04%
Erasmus incoming brochure	34.95%	14.88%	35.64%	10.38%	2.77%	1.38%
International prospectus brochure	39.10%	11.07%	33.56%	12.11%	2.77%	1.38%
Babeş-Bolyai University Facebook account	27.93%	16.90%	41.03%	10.34%	2.07%	1.72%

Table 1. Answers to the question: Please state if you are satisfied with the content and design?

Another important aspect to verify was the degree of satisfaction of the students regarding the Centre for International Cooperation webpage. The research tried to identify if it is considered user-friendly by the beneficiaries.

In order to identify the social media platform, we should concentrate on, we asked the students which one is used by them to obtain information. The results obtained are the following: Facebook: 67,65% responses, Instagram: 17,65% responses, Twitter: 2,94% responses, LinkedIn: 2,94% responses, Others: 8,82% responses. The surveys and the follow-up focus groups revealed the fact that we need to make some changes regarding the promotional instruments even though the answers showed that at this moment the instruments of promotion are used and work, they do not satisfy 100% of the beneficiaries' needs. The focus group discussions underlined the need for video tutorials, video testimonials from alumni, video testimonials from enrolled students, and a more interactive way of presenting the information.

Conclusions

Considering the continuous development of the academic marketing generated by the competition on the global market, more research is needed to increase the impact of the dissemination strategies. The increasing number of students enrolled in universities and participating in international programs funded by the European Union creates the need to find better solutions in disseminating and organizing the activities.

Even though this paper is about education, the academic offer is a service that is promoted to potential clients, especially when the offer is not free of charge for all the students. Higher education institutions, whether public or private, will try to attract the best potential candidates to enroll in their programs and try to find better solutions to manage related activities.

The results obtained in the study emphasize the fact that even though the methods used at present are working, they need to be adapted to the changing needs of the beneficiaries. The research shows that besides the factors we already were familiar with (university prestige, curricula, teaching languages, etc.) the location of the university is important in the decision process of the students. The content of the information materials must be adapted and include more information regarding the location of the institutions and the opportunities that students can have in that area. Also, the respondents to this study considered Facebook more suitable to be used for information purposes, than the other social media channels.

The students' opinions do not change drastically from one year to another, however, there are some new trends that must be taken into consideration. Universities must create more interactive ways to promote the university and to inform the students. The results obtained were taken into consideration at the institution level (alongside other research), and some changes were already implemented faster than usual given that the activities were mostly done online during the second semester of the academic year 2019-2020. The research was also used to change the recruiting strategy at the university level and there was

an increase in the number of international applications received, especially from outside the European Union.

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EVOLUTION OF NON-FINANCIAL REPORTING IN UE: AN ANALYSIS PRIOR TO THE PUBLICATION OF DIRECTIVE 2014/95/EU

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Abstract. *In a constantly changing economic environment, there has been a growing demand for non-financial reporting over time and the presentation of purely financial indicators is no longer sufficient for stakeholders in decision-making process. The present study aims to review the most important moments regarding corporate reporting practices and regulations on sustainability, environment and social issues in Europe, from a voluntary to a mandatory non-financial disclosure. This is a good opportunity to analyse the circumstances in which the non-financial reporting developed, reaching to be regulated only in 2014 by the Directive 2014/95/EU.*

In achieving the proposed objectives, we use a theoretical approach based on a review of scientific papers on the evolution of non-financial reporting and by conducting a documentary analysis of documents issued at European level in this regard. The global financial crisis has created the perfect circumstances for European regulation to intervene in order to mandate non-financial reporting. The Directive 2014/95/EU is the first step to a mandatory reporting which requires the public interest entities to present a minimum information relating to, at least, environmental matters, social and employee-related issues, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery matters, in order to increase transparency in the EU Member States and consumer trust.

Keywords: Non-financial reporting, Directive 2014/95/EU, voluntary/mandatory reporting, EU regulations, non-financial disclosure.

Introduction

In a constantly changing economic environment, the information presented by companies to stakeholders has become an increasingly important factor in the decision-making process of information users. The global financial crisis, unemployment problems, employee welfare, fraud, climate change, global warming in recent years, have made society and its actors more and more concerned with current social and economic order (Busco et al., 2013). The global economy continues to evolve, and companies face global competition, technological innovations and more regulation in response to financial crises and governance (Dumay et al., 2016).

The traditional financial reporting model has failed over time to adequately meet the stakeholder information needs, to assess the company's past and future performance in a new century in which social and environmental issues are essential (Flower, 2015; Atkins et al., 2015). In this context, to respond to the current challenges, strong external pressures, global constraints and stakeholder demands, corporate reporting is turning. Many companies are starting to supplement their traditional financial reporting with non-financial information, some of them do this thing voluntary and others because they are obligated to do that.

At the end of 2014, the European Union (EU) introduced Directive 2014/95/EU on the requirement for non-financial reporting by EU companies. The provisions of this Directive require the submission of non-financial information by enterprises with more than 500 employees from EU countries. These categories of businesses are required to report

information on non-financial issues that relate to their business operations (Dienes et al., 2016). The increasing attention in terms of social and environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility has led to the European Commission issuing Directive 2014/95/EU and then EU Guidelines 2017/C215/01 (EUG), to help European entities provide adequate information to respond to the information needs of stakeholders (Manes-Rossi et al., 2018).

The purpose of this paper is to review the most important moments regarding corporate reporting practices and regulations on sustainability, environment and social issues in Europe, from a voluntary to a mandatory non-financial disclosure, and to analyse the circumstances in which Directive 2014/95 / EU appeared.

Forms of non-financial reporting – a short presentation of the evolution of non-financial reporting.

Thus, in the context presented above, there has been an increase in the demand for non-financial information, and to meet a diverse range of information needs (other than those provided by traditional financial reporting), different forms and reporting frameworks have developed over time (De Villiers & Sharma, 2017). Until the last part of the 20th century, reporting of non-financial information (presentation of social and environmental information) was made through annual corporate reports (in the annual financial reports) (De Villiers et al., 2014). Subsequently, the company's social and environmental disclosures were made more and more in individual reports.

The lack of traditional reporting has led to the development of some forms of non-financial reporting over time, such as Intellectual Capital (IC) reporting, corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting, sustainability reporting (SR). Dumay (2016) points out that the rapid adoption of reports on intellectual capital (IC) has been overcome by adopting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports and sustainability reports (SR), thus, becoming common voluntary reporting regimes. Therefore, these reporting practices have developed as common voluntary reporting regimes. In particular, the SR has developed having as a framework for social and environmental reporting the Global Initiative Reporting (GRI) standard, whose guidelines have become increasingly complex and have covered a wider range of social, environmental, governance and sustainability reports.

Individual, social and environmental reports have become in time increasingly complex and long-size because information on a wider range of non-financial issues has been presented to respond to the alleged information needs of several stakeholders (De Villiers et al., 2014). Due to the fact that the reports were very detailed and contained a lot of information about companies' practices and social, environmental and economic policies and impacts, there has been an overload of information for the readers of the reports, making it difficult for them to appreciate the links between all the information presented in the report (Fries et al., 2010). More recently, possibly in response to the complexity and length of individual reports, and since the environmental and social information in the annual reports was not integrated with the financial information, some steps were taken in this regard, which sought to integrate social, environmental, financial and governance information (Dey & Burns, 2010), in a single report, and the resulting practices became known as integrated reporting (De Villiers et al., 2014). Many companies are beginning to supplement their traditional financial reporting with non-financial information, and by combining these two types of information (financial and non-financial) into one report, integrated reporting is born, which seems to be the latest evolution of the various types of reports over time. This type of reporting (integrated reporting) has attracted the interest of many companies that have voluntarily started to report non-financial information to stakeholders, providing greater transparency about how they engage in society and how they are doing their business. In the literature, this kind of reporting is considered to be the evolution of the sustainability report

(Mio, 2016). IR is mandatory in South Africa for listed companies, that must issue an integrated report (Cheng et al., 2014). Meanwhile, the requirement / the obligation of integrated reporting has developed in other forms in different parts of the world.

At the end of 2014, the European Union (EU) introduced Directive 2014/95/EU on the requirement for non-financial reporting by EU companies with more than 500 employees from EU countries. For the first time, non-financial information is a "part of a mandatory reporting scheme for major companies globally" (Dumay et al., 2019).

Methodology

In order to see how non-financial reporting has evolved over time, we use a qualitative methodology and a theoretical approach, going through as many scientific papers from the literature, as well as various public documents and press releases.

As a working methodology, we pay special attention to the timing of events that have contributed to the evolution of non-financial reporting in Europe, using as a strategy "causal reconstruction", highlighting the key factors that played an important role in achieving certain conditions that led to observable results (Monciardini, 2016).

Non-financial information practices and regulations: from a voluntary to a mandatory non-financial disclosure

The literature (Gray, 1996; Gray & Guthrie, 2007; Tilt, 2009; Testolin, 2019) shows that the beginnings of sustainable accounting date back to the 1960s, when the concept of social responsibility of business began to spread. The year 1961 marks the creation of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which was created to stimulate economic progress and world trade, currently involving 37 countries to identify and develop best practices to find a possible solution for a sustainable growth (Testolin, 2019). During this period there is talk about the social responsibility movement and about the environmental movement, highlighted by various scientific papers published until the 1970s.

Since the 1970s, the European Union has turned its attention to environmental policies and not only to these policies (Gaál, 2019). Across Europe there was a debate in the 1970s about social reporting (Monciardini, 2017), and the period between 1970 and 1980 was highlighted as a period in which social and environmental accounting was underdeveloped (Mathews, 1997). During this period there was no regulation regarding environmental accounting, and the natural environment remained one of the issues addressed by large corporations in their voluntary reporting (Gray, 1996). However, researchers were increasingly interested in these issues, especially concerned with what would be called "social accounting" (Mathews, 1997).

The next decade (1981-1990) is marked by a growing interest in social accounting (at the beginning of the decade) and by increased interest in environmental accounting (in the second part of the decade). Although there has been an increased use of conceptual frameworks, accounting standards and legal provisions, little of this accounting structure applies to social and environmental accounting, which is largely independent of current conceptual frameworks for accounting and financial accounting standards (Mathews, 1997). In this decade the practice of sustainability reporting became an important move in 1987 with the publication by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) of the report entitled "Our common future", known as the "Brundtland Report" (Testolin, 2019).

This report promotes economic growth based on policies that support and expand the environmental resource base, in order to improve the poverty that was spreading in the developing world. Also, it promotes the idea that humanity is responsible for sustainable development, and it is defined as follows: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 41). Thus, humanity has a great responsibility,

especially towards the environment: "The Earth is one, but the world is not. We all depend on one biosphere for sustaining our lives" (WCED, 1987, p. 28).

The years 1990-2000 are highlighted in the literature as a period in which the first attempts to implement CSR in practice took place (Bolotin, 2019). The 1990s marked the beginning of a gradual process by which social sustainability began to spread more and more, with the popularization of triple-bottom-line reporting taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects of business performance (Tiron-Tudor et al., 2019; Monciardini et al., 2017). In the following years (1991-1995) the attention paid to environmental issues increased dramatically. However, there is little regulation to address social and environmental accounting disclosures, which are not recognized and included in legal requirements or in a conceptual framework related to financial statements (Mathews, 1997).

The early 1990s marked the EU's commitment to non-financial reporting (Maj & Hawrysz, 2019; Dornean & Rusu, 2019; Gaál, 2019), which has been visible since the adoption of the European Community Programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development - "Towards Sustainability" (better known as The Fifth EC Environmental Action Programme) from 1992. However, this document only addresses environmental issues, including proposals for initiatives in the area of accounting. In the same year (1992), a crucial role in integrating CSR activities was played by the Rio de Janeiro conference (The Earth Summit) dedicated to development and safety of environment (Bolotin, 2019; Pieragnolo, 2019; Testolin, 2019). This was the first progressive step towards sustainable development through which representatives from different countries discussed at this conference, in addition to environmental and sustainable development issues, also the problem of common interests between enterprises and social issues (Bolotin, 2019).

A new model of sustainable development, being perceived as a tool to improve the state of the environment, social efficiency and competitiveness simultaneously, was proposed in The White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment (CEC, 1993) which attempted to create jobs and improve resource efficiency (Hey, 2005). Also, the sensitivity of the European Union towards the aspects related to sustainability is highlighted in the paper of Carini et al. (2018).

The process of CSR integration is associated in the literature with various factors (Bolotin, 2019) that appeared globally in the late 90s-early 2000s. These factors are represented by the emergence of several reporting frameworks, standards and guidelines in order to raise global awareness of the importance of sustainability and to increase the quality of non-financial reporting (Testolin, 2019). One of these factors is the emergence of GRI in 1997 in the USA, which helps various stakeholders to identify the impact on environment, society, corruption matters and human rights (Bolotin, 2019; Testolin, 2019). In terms of social and ethical reporting, in 1999 a corporate social reporting standard AA1100 was published to help companies in this regard (Bolotin, 2019). At EU level, Kinderman (2015) notes that the first attempt to mandate non-financial reporting took place on 15 January 1999 by British Labor MEP Richard Howitt's European Parliament resolution on non-financial reporting.

In response to the issues of sustainability that have become increasingly discussed around the world and the role of businesses in tackling them (Testolin, 2019), another globally recognized standard appeared in the 2000s, namely the United Nations Global Contact (UNGC). This is a principle-based framework for enterprises, which involves ten principles in four areas: human rights, labour standards, environment and, anti-corruption actions (Bolotin, 2019; Testolin, 2019). Also, in 2000 the Lisbon Summit organized by the European Council took place, which was a development and action plan for the economy of the European Union with the aim of sustainable economic growth and European economy as the most competitive in the world where CSR was taken into consideration (Bolotin, 2019;

Popescu, 2019; Dorean & Rusu, 2019). Following the Lisbon Summit, the European Commission has begun to look more closely at CSR issues.

The European Union has been promoting the importance of CSR as part of its sustainable development strategy since 1990, but especially after the Green Paper in 2001 (Dorean & Rusu, 2019; Popescu, 2019). As a result of the Lisbon Summit, in 2001, a *Green paper - Promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility* - was presented explaining concepts and elements related to CSR, and companies were encouraged to transpose this concept into their activities voluntarily (Bolotin, 2019; Dorean & Rusu, 2019; Pieragnolo, 2019). The concept of CSR has become a major area of interest for European Commission members since 2001, when the European Commission has made suggestions to companies to identify and consider all types of stakeholders and involve them in the activities of companies, in order to understand their needs and to develop a sustainable management (Popescu, 2019; Testolin, 2019).

Thus, in 2002, the European Commission presented a strategy calling for a new social and environmental role for business in a global economy, focusing in particular on how to promote CSR practices among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), this communication being called "*Corporate social responsibility: A business contribution to sustainable development.*" (Broughton, 2004). Following this communication, in the same year, an EU multi-stakeholder forum was set up to examine a number of issues related to CSR, such as promoting innovation, convergence and transparency in existing CSR practices and increasing credibility for achieving the EU's economic, social and environmental objectives (Broughton, 2004).

The literature attests that the first attempt to regulate CSR reporting for European companies was represented by the Account Modernization Directive 2003/51/EC (Kinderman, 2015; Aureli et al., 2019; Borisova et al., 2019), which required the reporting by companies (exempt SMEs) of environmental and employee issues, only if this is the case in terms of understanding the development, performance or position of the company.

In 2004, the EU multi-stakeholder forum on CSR issued the final report, which examined the following issues: knowledge, SMEs, development issues and transparency (Broughton, 2004; Bolotin, 2019). Based on this report, in 2005, the Prodi Commission prepared a draft CSR communication, which was rejected by the new Barroso Commission, which decided to move the mandate for elaborating a new text from DG Employment (EMPL) to DG Enterprise (ENTR), traditionally more 'business-oriented' (Monciardini, 2016; Kinderman, 2015).

In 2005, the Lisbon Strategy was relaunched, which was an essential component of the goal of sustainable development, namely improving welfare and living conditions in a sustainable way for present and future generations (Popescu, 2019). By renewing the Lisbon Strategy, the Commission has proposed a new beginning in order to ensure "stronger, lasting growth and creating more and better jobs" (Commission of the European Communities, 2005, p. 7).

Due to the demand by investors for reliable and comparable information, which takes full account of social and environmental issues, in 2006 the "European Alliance for Corporate Social Responsibility" was launched in order to ensure a sustainable market economy and improve communication and values in the field of non-financial performance (Popescu, 2019; Kinderman, 2015). This Alliance was supported by the European Commission, where European companies of all sizes were invited to express their support voluntarily, in order "to mobilize the resources and capacities of European enterprises and to make Europe a pole of excellence on CSR" (European Commission, 2006, p. 1).

Following this Commission Communication on CSR in 2006, the EU Parliament adopted a resolution calling on the EU Commission to extend legal obligations by creating a list of criteria that companies must meet if they claim to be responsible (European Parliament,

2007). At this request, the EU executive reaffirmed that CSR should not be regulated at the EU level, CSR being voluntary, and as a result all NGOs abandoned the EU Forum for CSR. However, this political debate took another turn in 2008, following the onset of the global financial crisis (Monciardini, 2016).

The literature talks about the fact that the global financial crisis has created the perfect circumstances for European regulation to intervene in order to mandate non-financial reporting, this crisis being seen as the beginning of a CSR revolution (Aureli et al., 2019; Dorean & Rusu, 2019) and as "a powerful catalyst as it weakened the legitimacy of business" (Kinderman, 2013). Kinderman (2013) states that "The financial crisis produced a political climate more favourable towards regulation, but not a paradigmatic or transformative shift". The negative effects of the crisis felt by the diminishing of non-renewable resources, climate change, are some of the reasons why businesses need to present a sustainable and responsible business model by disclosing both financial and non-financial information, to test their code of social responsibility (Popescu & Banta, 2019). Thus, the importance of the disclosure of non-financial information has increased more and more, especially in the field of risk, after the global crisis (Leopizzi et al., 2019). This financial crisis has led to both financial losses and loss of stakeholder confidence, and transparency has become an increasingly important topic, bringing with it increasing investor interest in non-financial information, companies being forced to present more and more information about their future activities and plans (Nunes, 2019; Testolin, 2019).

According to Monciardini (2016), after the onset of the crisis, organized civil society tried to push for a review of the EU's inadequate corporate responsibility strategy. As a result, the European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ) was able to participate in the multi-stakeholder forum for CSR, in exchange for a review of the EU approach to CSR, an agreement reached in February 2009, and as a result they returned to the forum. In the meantime, the ECCJ has prepared three legislative proposals, including one on transparency, which they have sent to the European Commission, and which have been carefully examined. A second move on CSR was made by financial analysts. Although the CSR community had grown dramatically in recent months, there was a lack of a framework of reliable KPIs that prevented the incorporation of ESG into investment analysis and decision-making, here was the role of financial analysts. So, in March 2008, the DVFA (German Society of Investment Professionals) launched a set of KPIs for ESG information, receiving an unqualified approval from the European Federation of Financial Analysts Societies (EFFAS) therefore, obtaining the official standard status of EFFAS. This framework, entitled "ESG Key Performance Indicators for Environmental, Social and Governance Issues. A Guideline for Corporates on How to Report on ESG and a Benchmark for Investment Professionals on How to Integrate ESG into Financial Analysis" (revised April 2009; September 2010), was an instrument used in EU decision-making, being highlighted as the first main framework adapted to the needs of investors. The third crucial move was made by the EU Commission, which gradually changed its position on CSR regulation, along with a part of the financial sector, as the number of supporters for mandatory CSR had risen significantly (Monciardini, 2016).

In this sense, the first tangible sign that the European Commission has changed its strategy in relation to CSR and in terms of regulation, as a consequence of the financial crisis, was represented by EU Workshops on ESG disclosure hosted by Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry (DG- ENTR) between September 2009 and February 2010. Thus, in these workshops on company disclosure of environmental, social and governance (ESG) information, the European Commission invited all stakeholders to participate, the final conclusion being that the decision not to change EU policy would not be appropriate, given the multiple sustainability challenges that require fundamental change, and the NFR disclosure regime being poor or very poor (Monciardini et al., 2017; Kinderman, 2015). Also, in 2009 another important step in terms of social responsibility took place with the London

meeting hosted by The Prince of Wales' organization, Accounting for Sustainability Project (A4S), where some of the key players in the field of financial and non-financial accounting have laid the foundations of the first International Integrated Reporting Committee (IIRC) (Monciardini et al., 2017; Testolin, 2019).

In March 2010, the European Commission launched a new agenda entitled "*EUROPE 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*" with the aim of creating more jobs and better lives, in order to recover from the financial crisis. Thus, "The Commission is proposing five measurable EU targets for 2020 that will steer the process and be translated into national targets: for employment; for research and innovation; for climate change and energy; for education; and for combating poverty" (European Commission, 2010a, p. 3).

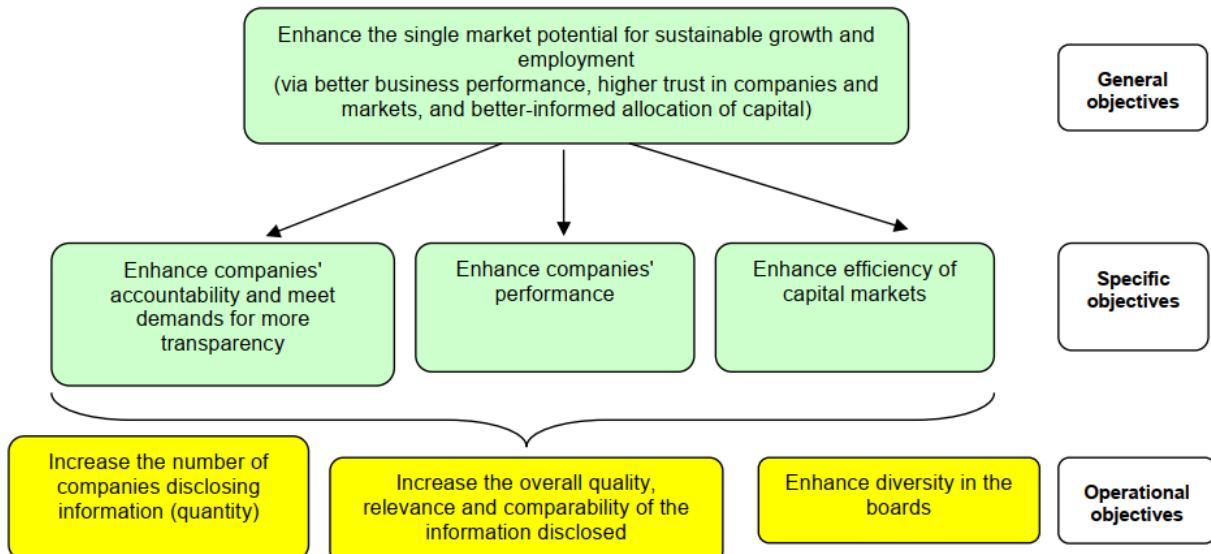
In October 2010, the European Commission adopted a Communication on the Single Market Act which emphasizes that the single market is the way to respond to the repercussions of the financial crisis and a way to restore confidence and provide even more growth and jobs. This communication mentions that measures aimed at improving the transparency and quality of non-financial information presented by companies, especially in terms of the environment, human rights, sustainable development, could contribute to strengthening the perception and management of business risks and long-term economic and social performance (European Commission, 2010b). Therefore, in order to gather stakeholders' views on how to improve the disclosure of non-financial information by businesses, based on this Communication, the European Commission launched a public consultation from 22 November 2010 to 28 February 2011. The result of this public consultation showed that the majority of respondents consider that legal regimes differ significantly between EU Member States in the disclosure of non-financial information, leading to a difficulty in benchmarking between companies. Respondents described the legal regime as poor or extremely poor, and the issue of transparency through insufficient disclosure of non-financial information creates a problem for stakeholders in terms of the involvement of companies in CSR activities (European Commission, 2013).

According to Monciardini, Dumay & Biondi (2017, p. 5) "the year 2011 marked a new phase in the EU debate on CSR reporting regulation", the European Commission changing its position (Monciardini, 2016), and as a result of the public consultation, in April 2011 the Commission announced that "will present a legislative proposal on the transparency of the social and environmental information provided by companies in all sectors" (European Commission, 2011a, p. 15), this being an important step towards mandatory non-financial disclosures (Krasodomska et al., 2020). Thus, in communication entitled "Single Market Act. Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence. "Working together to create new growth"" (2011, April), the Commission stressed investors' power and business' freedom (Monciardini, 2016) and identified the need for all Member States to improve the transparency of their social and environmental information from all sectors, to be similarly high level, emphasizing the importance of communication of such non-financial information by companies (Amelio, 2017).

If in the 2001 Green Paper, CSR was defined as a "concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (Commission of The European Communities, 2001, p. 6), in the Commission Communication of October 2011 entitled "A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility", a new definition of CSR is presented as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society" (European Commission, 2011b, p. 6). On this perspective of the new definition of CSR, which is a radical move (Kinderman, 2013) and "appears much more general and less accurate than the previous one" (Carini et al., 2018, p. 5), the voluntary side of the decision of the companies vanishes (Kinderman, 2013; Testolin, 2019). In this sense, enterprises must act "over and above their legal obligations towards society and the environment" (European Commission,

2011 b, p. 3) by integrating “social, environmental, ethical, human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy, in close collaboration with their stakeholders” (European Commission, 2011b, p. 6). So, the role of companies becomes quite important in terms of CSR development, public authorities having a supporting role for companies “through a smart mix of voluntary policy measures and, where necessary, complementary regulation” (European Commission, 2011b, p. 7). In this communication (from October 2011) was reiterated the need to improve the transparency of the social and environmental disclosure by companies (Amelio, 2017; Carini et al., 2018; Pieragnolo, 2019) and a new CSR strategy (based on the “Europe 2020 strategy”) is presented, containing a 4-year agenda through which the Commission aims “to create conditions favourable to sustainable growth, responsible business behaviour and durable employment generation in the medium and long term” (European Commission, 2011b, p. 4), “such as mandatory non-financial reporting, respect for the law” (Kinderman, 2013). Kinderman (2013) states that businesses were not very pleased with the new agenda of 2011 and the new definition of CSR, highlighting the opposition of European companies, especially German officials represented by the German employers' associations (BDA / BDI) (Monciardini, 2016), who asked the Commission to cancel the whole renewed agenda and, although they tried to prevent the Commission from moving forward with disclosure requirements, the Commission's proposal “did see the light of day” (Kinderman, 2015, p. 4). Also, in the opinion of Kinderman (2013) CSR seemed “ambiguous, amorphous and elastic”, this being highlighted by his criticism of the European Commission: “The Commission's failure to break decisively with shareholder value and voluntarism in its late-2012 Action Plan on European Company Law and Corporate Governance is a case in point. The Commission's only concrete policy proposal in the area of CSR is an amendment of the 4th Company Law Directive of 1978” (Kinderman, 2013, p. 13).

Although the European Commission announced in its October 2011 Communication that it would present an operational proposal by the end of 2011, this proposal appeared only in April 2013 (Monciardini, 2016). In February 2013, the European Parliament highlighted in its resolutions *“Corporate Social Responsibility: accountable, transparent and responsible business behaviour and sustainable growth”* and *“Corporate Social Responsibility: promoting society's interests and a route to sustainable and inclusive recovery”* the importance of companies information on sustainability (with reference to environmental and social factors) in order to identify sustainability risks and increase transparency and confidence of investors and consumers, asking the Commission to present a legislative proposal on the disclosure of non-financial information by businesses (European Union, 2014). Therefore, in April 2013, the European Commission announced its initial proposal for non-financial reporting (Kinderman, 2015) which aims to solve two main issues: the inadequate transparency of non-financial information and the insufficient diversity in the boards (European Commission, 2013). In this respect, the Commission proposal takes into account the following objectives highlighted in Figure 1.



Source: European Commission (2013, 25).

Figure 1. The objectives of the proposal for a Directive regarding non-financial disclosure

This European Commission proposal requires companies to submit only a statement that includes a description of “policies pursued by the company on the above-referred matters; their results; and risk-management related aspects” regarding the disclosure of material information “concerning at least social (including employees), environmental, human rights, anticorruption and bribery matters” (European Commission, 2013, p. 61). To do this, companies can use existing national or international reporting frameworks, having the flexibility to disclose the content of their policies and if one or more of the above areas are not relevant to them, they will be allowed to explain why that was the case. This approach of the European Commission is criticized by Monciardini (2016, p. 11) in terms of the great flexibility offered to companies and the fact that non-financial KPIs have not been integrated into the existing financial strategy and operations of large companies: “In so doing, the EU lost a precious opportunity to shape the global regulatory debate and made comparability impervious”. Monciardini (2016) considers that there are three reasons that prevented the European Commission from achieving a prospective, solid and strong result, presenting “such a weak legal draft” after so many years of debates. One of these reasons is the opposition of companies led by the German employers' associations (BDA / BDI) (as mentioned by Kinderman, 2013). The second reason is represented by the financial crisis, which “had turned into a sovereign debt crisis. Therefore, the regulatory priorities and power-struggles had shifted” (Monciardini, 2016, p. 11). The third reason is represented by the accounting profession, which lacked a good understanding of social and environmental issues and their relevance, playing “multiple identities: independent external experts (FEE, PwC, IIRC), private and public standard setters (IASB, EFRAG) and, in particular, EU policy-makers (Unit F3, DG MARKT)”, being able to “neutralise” this potentially threatening development and effectively push back activist-layers and financial analysts, exploiting its strategic positions within the accounting regulatory field” (Monciardini, 2016, p. 12).

In June 2013, the European Parliament and the Council issued the Directive 2013/34/EU, with the role of ensuring the clear definition and comparability of financial statements, other than International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), establishing general financial reporting principles and applying to limited liability companies in the European Union, EU countries being required to transpose this Directive into national law by 20 July 2015 (European Union, 2013).

Since the requirements of the legislation before 2014 proved to be unclear and inefficient, being applied in different ways by Member States and by very few companies (European

Commission, 2014), Directive 2013/34/EU is amended by the Directive 2014/95/EU regarding disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups. The year of 2014 is a significant one for the European regulation regarding non-financial reporting because Directive 2014/95/EU is the first regulation that makes non-financial reporting mandatory, with the role of increasing transparency between EU Member States and consumer trust. The requirements of this Directive involve the presentation by the public interest companies with more than 500 employees of at least environmental matters, social and employee-related issues, respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery matters and if they do not report one of them, they must explain why. This Directive had to be transposed into the national laws of the Member States by the end of 2016 and the enterprises that are subject of this Directive are obliged to report from the first of January 2017 or during the year 2017 (European Union, 2014). In some European countries “the implementation of the new regulations will only be the confirmation of national non-financial reporting practices” (Dyduch & Krasodomska, 2017). In this sense, we can mention the influential countries like: France, Denmark, UK (Makarenko & Sirkovska, 2017) that had been subjected to detailed mandatory NFR requirements before the appearance of the Directive and which together with two other countries: Belgium and the Netherlands supported the NFR Directive (Kinderman, 2015). The countries mentioned above had a significant impact on the negotiations on the Directive 2014/95/EU, besides these we mention Germany. Thus, the role in the negotiations was the following: France was the strongest supporter of the Directive (Kinderman, 2015; Kinderman, 2019), “Germany was the staunchest, most hardline opponent, [...] and the United Kingdom (UK) was somewhere in-between” (Kinderman, 2019, p. 2).

To help companies, the EU has issued a guideline in 2017, respectively EU Guidelines 2017/C215/01 (EUG), trying to help companies in reporting non-financial information. The Directive 2014/95/EU together with the EUG Guidelines are mandatory for European public interest entities to transmit non-financial information to improve the accountability of these European entities to stakeholders. The EU allows companies to choose the framework they want to adopt to provide the information required by the Directive, at the same time, giving companies a great deal of freedom when it comes to reporting non-financial information. Also, the Directive does not oblige the companies concerned to audit the non-financial information statement, but only to provide an assurance that the information was presented, not a verification of the way they were presented.

Conclusions

Although the beginnings of sustainable accounting date back to the 1960s, the EU's commitment to non-financial reporting has only been noted since the early 1990s. The European Union has been promoting the importance of CSR as part of its sustainable development strategy since 1990, but especially after the Green Paper in 2001.

The literature attests that the first attempt to regulate CSR reporting for European companies was represented by the Account Modernization Directive 2003/51/EC (Kinderman, 2015; Aureli et al., 2019; Borisova et al., 2019), which required the reporting by companies (exempt SMEs) of environmental and employee issues, only if this is the case in terms of understanding the development, performance or position of the company.

The global financial crisis has created the perfect circumstances for European regulation to intervene in order to mandate non-financial reporting.

The year 2011 marked a new stage in the EU debate on CSR regulation, with the European Commission announcing that it will present a legislative proposal on the transparency of social and environmental information provided by companies in all sectors. This proposal appeared only in April 2013 and in June 2013, the European Parliament and the Council issued the Directive 2013/34/EU, which is amended by the Directive 2014/95/EU.

After years of debate, the reporting of non-financial information came to be regulated, despite the impediments on this route (for example, the resistance of the Germans). However, Directive 2014/95/EU is considered quite flexible, which is a disadvantage. For example, the freedom offered to companies to report non-financial information according to different national or international frameworks, makes it difficult to compare the performance of companies by stakeholders, even within the same sectors.

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INVESTORS' SENTIMENT EFFECTS ON EUROPEAN STOCK MARKETS

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Abstract. This paper's aim is to highlight the impact of investors' sentiment and the asymmetric effects of extreme market conditions on herding behavior in the fifteen European stock markets. The element of novelty consists in the introduction of investors' sentiment in the analysis of the presence of mimicry in the financial decisions making process. The cross-sectional absolute deviation approach which has been developed by Chang et al. (2000) and afterward improved by Yao et al. (2014) will be estimated, having the objective to quantify the relationship between the return dispersions of individual stocks and the market return and to identify the investors' sentiment effects on herding behavior in the European stock markets. Using daily close values of the indices and the stocks and two sentiment indicators, the empirical results provide evidence that the sentiments influence the conduct of the market participants in Greece, Cyprus, Sweden, Switzerland, Portugal and Denmark. The empirical evidence varies depending on the sentiment indicator included in the model, the Fear and Greed Index being meaningful in the identification of herding behavior when investors are optimistic.

Keywords: investors' sentiments, stock markets, herding behavior, nonlinear regression

JEL Classification: G02, G11, G15

Introduction

The investors' expectations regarding the evolution of the macroeconomic environment and their risk perception draw the main guidelines in the investment decision-making process. Market participants interact, their behavior is defined by sentiments such as confidence, fear, euphoria, panic, optimism, pessimism, temperance, greed, their willingness to adopt the collective behavior from the market being influenced by the mimicry of the investment decisions of other market participants, low levels of financial education, ignorance of their information and beliefs, adoption of the preferences and choices realized by other individuals, fear to define their own level of risk. The investors' sentiment and their subjective views related to the risk-return relationship are incorporated in the financial asset prices and influence the dynamics of the stock markets.

One of the most debated topics in the financial literature is the theory of efficient markets, which has been developed by Fama in 1970. According to this theory, the price of a financial asset fully and instantly reflects all the available information from the market and investors behave rationally. Several studies from the financial literature Grossman and Stiglitz (1980), De Bondt and Thaler (1985), Shiller (1990, 2003) have questioned the assumptions of the efficient market hypothesis and argue for the predictability of the financial markets and the existence of irrational behavior. In the same direction, Thaler and Barberis (2003) point out that the movements in asset prices are generated by deviations from the fundamental value, which are caused by the presence of irrational investors.

In this context, the concept of herding behavior is located on the frontier between classical finance and behavioral finance. The existing studies from the financial literature

identify two categories of models used to determine if or not there is herding behavior on financial markets: the first category of models, which points out the investors' tendency to take similar actions as other market participants and to trade an asset at the same time (the LSV model proposed by Lakonishok, Shleifer and Vishny (1992) and the PCM model developed by Wermers (1995)) and the second category of models, which highlights the collective behavior of all investors towards the market trend (the CSSD model provided by Christie and Huang (1995), the CSAD model developed by Chang *et al.* (2000) and the state space model created by Hwang and Salmon (2001, 2004, 2008)). This study will focus on the second category of models, namely on the cross-sectional absolute deviation approach which has been developed by Chang *et al.* (2000).

Having the objective to define a complex image and to formulate adequate opinions related to the impact of sentiments on investors' behavior from European stock markets, using the CSAD model (*i.e.*, cross-sectional standard deviation), initially developed by Chang *et al.* (2000) and afterward improved by Yao *et al.* (2014), the following hypothesis will be tested:

H1: The European stock markets are characterized by the presence of investors' herding behavior;

H2: There is an asymmetry in the investors' herding behavior, influenced by the dynamics of the stock markets;

H3: The sentiments influence the investors' behavior on stock markets.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the analysis of the financial literature; Section 3 describes the methodology applied to identify the existence of herding behavior, the impact of extreme market conditions and investors' sentiment on herding behavior and provides evidence for the datasets; Section 4 highlights the empirical results and the last section concludes.

Literature review

The investors' sentiment and their behavior on the stock markets are topics explored in the current research from the financial literature. There is a large range of studies, both for developed and emerging capital markets, individual and institutional investors, using various models that identify the investors' tendency to mimic the actions of other market participants or highlight the investors' willingness to follow the market consensus and different methods applied to quantify the investors' sentiment: direct methods, indirect methods, composite indicators, innovative methods.

Massis and Zapranis (2014) investigate the determinants of the investors' behavior for the stock markets from France, Germany, the United Kingdom and China and identify the existence of interconnection between macroeconomic shocks on the industrial production index and the 10-year bond yield and the appearance of the herding behavior. Galariotis *et al.* (2014) examine the determinants of the herding behavior in the United States and United Kingdom capital markets and point out the important role that the announcements related to macroeconomic events have in investors' tendency to follow the market consensus, illustrating the idea that preferences and forward-looking beliefs of the market participants are influenced. Other contributions from the study highlight the role of country-specific characteristics in the investors' mimicry. A complex overview of the casuistry of psychological factors is provided by Corredor *et al.* (2013), who consider two channels that influence the prices of the financial assets: investors' sentiment and arbitrage. The sentiments evolve in response to certain stimuli, mainly for the companies, which require additional efforts to be evaluated by investors: shares of small companies, shares with high volatility, shares that have experienced extreme growth, shares of newly

established companies, shares of companies that have not distributed dividends. Additionally, arbitrage is costly for these types of companies previously mentioned.

Ni *et al.* (2015) examine the role of the company's characteristics on investors' sentiment for the Chinese stock market and use a panel model estimated through a quantile-based regression. The obtained results provide arguments that support the asymmetric impact of sentiments on returns on the stock market. Depending on the projected horizon, the impact of investor sentiment changes: firstly, the investors' sentiment has a positive impact on stock market returns for a short time horizon (3 months) and secondly, the investors' behavior has a negative impact on a long-time horizon (6-12 months). Additionally, group analysis was performed by considering the following variables: market capitalization, price-to-book ratio, and beta coefficient. The empirical evidence supports the impact of the investors' sentiment for the following groups: companies that record higher market capitalization, companies that have a medium level recorded by the price-to-book ratio, companies that have associated higher value of the beta coefficient. Similar results for the Chinese market were obtained by Xu and Zhou (2018), who used the Partial Least Square (PLS) method and portfolio analysis based on market capitalization and price-to-book ratio to quantify the impact of investors' sentiment on the evolution of stock markets. The conclusions highlighted a positive impact of investors' sentiment on the evolution of the stock returns listed in the Chinese market. In the research realized by Huang *et al.* (2019) for the US stock market, an investors' sentiment indicator has been developed based on innovative methods by using the information provided by Google trends for the following terms: 'cash', 'bubble', 'return', 'stock', 'gain', 'transaction', 'dividend', 'income', 'war', 'society'. The empirical results indicate that the usage of the indicator developed based on the information provided by Google allows the development of a forecast model for the movements of the S&P 500 Index.

Methodology

To identify the presence of the herding behavior in developed European markets, I will adjust the initial model proposed by Chang *et al.* (2000). The authors consider the hypothesis according to which during the periods characterized by ample price movements, the relationship between the return dispersions of the financial assets and market return is expected to be nonlinear. In this paper, I have estimated an improved version of the CSAD model, which has been developed by Yao *et al.* (2014), by introducing two new variables in the model equation, respectively: \bar{R}_M , the average market return, with the aim to reduce the multicollinearity and a lagged value of the dependent variable, $CSAD_{t-1}$ to offer robustness to the model. The model equation has the following form:

$$CSAD_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot R_{M,t} + \beta_2 \cdot |R_{M,t}| + \beta_3 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 + \beta_4 \cdot CSAD_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

The negative and statistically significant value of the β_3 the coefficient will provide evidence for the presence of investors' herding behavior.

In the estimation of the multiple regression models, I have used the OLS method improved by the Newey West estimator (1997), meant to correct the correlation, respectively the autocorrelation and heteroskedasticity of the variables considered in the model.

Asymmetric effects of investors' sentiment and market evolution

In order to analyze whether the market dynamics contribute to a certain extent to the presence of investors' mimicry, I will consider the hypothesis supported by the results of the empirical studies from the financial literature, according to which market participants'

tendency to manifest herding behavior is more accentuated during periods characterized by over-optimism and euphoria.

The following model will be estimated to highlight the relationship between the effects of investors' pessimism on herding behavior during stock market downturns:

$$CSAD_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot |R_{M,t}| \cdot D_P^{Down} + \beta_2 \cdot |R_{M,t}| \cdot (1 - D_P^{Down}) + \beta_3 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 \cdot D_P^{Down} + \beta_4 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 \cdot (1 - D_P^{Down}) + \beta_5 \cdot CSAD_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (1)$$

where, D_P^{Down} represents a dummy variable that takes the value of 1, when there is evidence of a downturn in the stock market and the investors are pessimistic.

The stock market is supposed to record a downturn if the daily market return has a negative value. On the other hand, the stock market return is assumed to register an upturn, if the daily market return has a positive value.

The below model will be run to quantify the relationship between the effects of investors' optimism on herding behavior during stock market upturns:

$$CSAD_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot |R_{M,t}| \cdot D_O^{Up} + \beta_2 \cdot |R_{M,t}| \cdot (1 - D_O^{Up}) + \beta_3 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 \cdot D_O^{Up} + \beta_4 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 \cdot (1 - D_O^{Up}) + \beta_5 \cdot CSAD_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (2)$$

where, D_O^{Up} represents a dummy variable that takes the value of 1, when there is evidence of an upturn in the stock market and the investors are optimistic.

In the stock market, herding behavior is indicated by negative and significant values of β_3 and β_4 coefficients. If the empirical results indicate the presence of herding behavior, it is confirmed the assumption according to which the investment decision process is influenced by investors' sentiments and by the market dynamics.

The effects of investors' sentiments on herding behavior

The presence of the herding behavior on stock markets confirms the relevance of the psychological factors in the investors' decision-making process. Sentiments and herding behavior are interdependent, the incorporation of psychological factors in investors' decisions can generate biased expectations regarding the future evolution of the financial assets' prices, erroneously inducing market euphoria and emergence of collective behavior, which will facilitate the loss of individuality of the actions of the market participants.

The analysis of the investors' mood constitutes a challenge for researchers in finance and psychology, as the current results from the financial literature vary depending on the method used to quantify the sentiments (Baker & Wurgler, 2006; Zouaoui, 2011; Corredor *et al.*, 2013; Moller, 2014; Yu *et al.*; 2015; Wei, Y.C. *et al.* 2016; Maitra & Dash, 2017).

This study aims to highlight the effects of investors' sentiment, quantified through the Fear and Greed Index, calculated by Bloomberg and Relative Strength Index (RSI) on herding behavior. Fear and Greed Index is a technical analysis indicator, which captures the investors' sentiments in the context of capital markets, the negative values highlighting emotions such as fear, while the positive values indicate investors' greed.

The Relative Strength Index (RSI) records values between 0 and 100. If the value of the technical indicator is above 70, the market is overvalued and if the value is below 30, the market is oversold, being undervalued by the investors.

The effects of the investors' sentiments on herding behavior were quantified by estimating the following model:

$$CSAD_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot D^S \cdot |R_{M,t}| + \beta_2 \cdot (1 - D^S) \cdot |R_{M,t}| + \beta_3 \cdot D^S \cdot (R_{M,t} - \overline{R_M})^2 + \beta_4 \cdot (1 - D^S) \cdot (R_{M,t} - \overline{R_M})^2 + \beta_5 \cdot CSAD_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \quad (3)$$

where, D^S indicates a dummy variable with a value of 1, if the investors are optimistic (the Fear and Greed Index records positive values) and 0, otherwise (the investors are pessimistic and the Fear and Greed Index records negative values).

The coefficients β_3 and β_4 should be negative and statistically significant in the presence of herding. If the value of the β_3 coefficient is negative and statistically significant the herding behavior will be more persistent in an overbought market. Additionally, if the estimated value of the β_4 coefficient is negative and statistically significant, it can be concluded that pessimism influences the investors' herding behavior in the stock markets.

Data

The data used in this study is represented by daily stock prices associated with 5,518 companies listed in 15 European stock markets: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and by market indices quotations, from January 2000 to November 2016. The data source is represented by Thomson Reuters DataStream.

Each stock and market index had its logarithmic daily returns calculated according to the relationship $R_{i,t} = \ln\left(\frac{P_{i,t}}{P_{i,t-1}}\right)$, where $P_{i,t}$ indicates the market index/stock i's closing price on day t.

According to Chang et al.(2000), the dispersion of returns across stocks for each market is determined, to identify the existence of the herding behavior, using the relation $CSAD_t = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n |R_{i,t} - R_{M,t}|$, where n represents the number of companies listed in the stock market at time t, $R_{i,t}$ is the company i's stock return at time t, $R_{M,t}$ is at time t, the market's return.

The descriptive statistics for the daily cross-sectional standard deviation of returns and the market index return in each nation for the study period (2000–2016) are shown in Table 1.

Country / No. of observations	No. of companies	Variable	Mean (%)	Standard deviation (%)	AD F	Autocorrelation			
						1	5	10	20
United Kingdom (4,405)	1,256	CSA D	1.81	0.72	- 8.8 1** *	0 .5 5	0 .4 6	0 .4 1	0 .3 3
		R _M	0.00	1.20	- 32. 34* **	0 .0 4	0 .0 5	0 .0 2	0 .0 1
Germany (4,405)	750	CSA D	2.53	0.85	- 8.8 4** *	0 .5 1	0 .4 1	0 .3 5	0 .3 2
		R _M	0.01	1.52	- 67.	0	0	0	0

					54* **	. 0 2	. 0 5	. 0 1	0 1
France (4,405)	1,034	CSA D	1.75	0.78	- 7.8 0** *	0 .5 5	0 .5 1	0 .4 7	0 .4 1
		R _M	0.00	1.48	- 33. 01* **	-. 0 3	-. 0 6	-. 0 2	-. 0 0
Belgium (4,505)	134	CSA D	1.50	0.69	- 8.2 6** *	0 .5 4	0 .4 4	0 .3 9	0 .3 0
		R _M	0.00	1.27	- 62. 31* **	0 .0 6	0 .0 4	0 .0 1	0 .0 1
Italy (4,405)	312	CSA D	1.61	0.65	- 9.5 8** *	0 .5 9	0 .4 9	0 .4 1	0 .3 3
		R _M	-0.02	1.55	- 31. 95* **	-. 0 3	-. 0 7	-. 0 1	0 .0 1
Spain (4,190)	145	CSA D	1.49	0.64	- 8.4 5** *	0 .4 9	0 .4 0	0 .3 7	0 .3 0
		R _M	0.00	1.51	- 47. 69* **	0 .0 1	0 .0 5	0 .0 3	0 .0 0
Portugal (4,377)	38	CSA D	1.61	0.77	- 9.0 7** *	0 .5 6	0 .4 5	0 .4 2	0 .3 7
		R _M	-0.02	1.21	- 61. 02* **	0 .0 8	0 .0 3	0 .0 0	0 .0 0
Greece (4,405)	205	CSA D	2.52	1.07	- 12. 05* **	0 .4 3	0 .3 5	0 .2 7	0 .2 4
		R _M	0.00	1.45	-	-. -	-. -	-. -	-. -

					32. 16* **	0 .0 1	0 .0 6	0 .0 2	0 .0 0
Cyprus (3,186)	85	CSA D	2.57	1.89	- 10. 59* **	0 .3 8	0 .3 0	0 .2 5	0 .2 1
		R _M	-0.09	2.50	- 51. 21* **	0 .1 0	0 .0 0	0 .0 3	0 .0 3
Norway (3,181)	205	CSA D	2.08	0.87	- 6.4 1** *	0 .5 8	0 .5 0	0 .4 4	0 .4 1
		R _M	0.04	1.63	- 57. 48* **	0 .0 2	0 .0 6	0 .0 2	0 .0 3
Sweden (3,967)	497	CSA D	2.37	0.95	- 9.4 2** *	0 .5 6	0 .4 8	0 .4 2	0 .3 9
		R _M	0.02	1.46	- 65. 16* **	0 .0 3	0 .0 5	0 .0 3	0 .0 0
Finland (4,405)	142	CSA D	1.77	0.78	- 7.3 9** *	0 .5 0	0 .4 4	0 .3 8	0 .3 5
		R _M	0.00	1.52	- 64. 31* **	0 .0 3	0 .0 4	0 .0 1	0 .0 1
Denmark (4,405)	140	CSA D	1.76	0.77	- 8.3 0** *	0 .5 3	0 .4 0	0 .3 6	0 .3 3
		R _M	0.03	1.29	- 64. 21* **	0 .0 3	0 .0 4	0 .0 0	0 .0 0
Switzerland (1,441)	248	CSA D	1.26	0.47	- 8.7 7** *	0 .4 4	0 .2 9	0 .1 4	0 .1 4

		R _M	0.00	1.02	- 34. 71* **	0 .0 8	0 .0 8	0 .0 1 6	0 .0 1 4
Russia (2,425)	327	CSA D	1.96	1.09	- 5.2 3** *	0 .5 0	0 .4 2	0 .3 4	0 .3 0
		R _M	0.00	1.34	- 40. 71* **	0 .1 8	0 .0 7	0 .0 3	0 .0 4

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Note: ***indicates statistical significance at the 1% level, **indicates statistical significance at the 5% level,
*indicates statistical significance at the 10% level.

The average stock market return varies from one country to another, the highest values being recorded in Norway and Denmark. A low dispersion of returns recorded in the United Kingdom, Portugal and Denmark may constitute a direction of the existence of the herding behavior on these stock markets. The correlation indicators recorded by the daily cross-sectional standard deviation of returns have significant values for higher lags, which supports the inclusion of a lagged variable in the model. The results of the Augmented Dickey-Fuller statistics are significant and indicate that all the analyzed time series are stationary.

Results

This section contains the empirical evidence obtained by rolling the regression models (1), (2), and (3), having the objective to identify the investors' tendency to imitate the actions of other participants in European stock exchanges, as well as the factors that determine the frequency of herding behavior. Two sentiment indicators are included in the models, the Fear and Greed Index and the Relative Strength Index.

The validation of the hypotheses according to which exists an interdependence between herding behavior, investors' sentiment and market dynamics are argued by the estimated results of regressions (1) and (2). Negative and statistically significant β_3 and β_4 coefficients provide evidence for asymmetric effects of investors' sentiment and market dynamics on the existence of herding behavior.

$CSAD_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot R_{M,t} \cdot D_P^{Down} + \beta_2 \cdot R_{M,t} \cdot (1 - D_P^{Down}) + \beta_3 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 \cdot D_P^{Down} + \beta_4 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 \cdot (1 - D_P^{Down}) + \beta_5 \cdot CSAD_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$								
Country	Investors' sentiment	β_0	β_1	β_2	β_3	β_4	β_5	R^2 (Adj.)
UK	Fear and Greed	0.007 4*** (28.5 052)	0.603 3*** (32.1 626)	0.540 5*** (31.0 205)	0.211 0 (0.56 61)	- 0.348 4 (- 1.127 9)	0.32 68** * (21. 2842)	0.751 6
	RSI	0.007 4*** (27.9 022)	0.581 3*** (29.1 968)	0.513 0*** (17.3 022)	0.038 5 (0.08 06)	- 0.120 0 (- 0.278 8)	0.32 72** * (21. 1729)	0.748 5
Germany	Fear and Greed	0.011 6*** (32.7 762)	0.526 6*** (19.2 311)	0.463 3*** (16.7 302)	1.144 9** (1.86 61)	0.423 4 (0.732 7)	0.31 86** * (22. 8598)	0.710 9
	RSI	0.011 8*** (33.5 988)	0.487 5*** (18.1 682)	0.529 5*** (8.47 99)	1.482 5** (2.48 14)	- 1.056 5 (- 0.869 6)	0.31 75** * (23. 1084)	0.707 7
France	Fear and Greed	0.005 9*** (21.7 848)	0.554 4*** (28.7 969)	0.513 4*** (22.6 184)	0.517 9 (1.17 21)	0.082 9 (0.145 7)	0.34 03** * (20. 3096)	0.816 7
	RSI	0.006 0*** (22.1 814)	0.531 6*** (27.3 253)	0.570 4*** (13.1 061)	0.556 3 (1.13 98)	- 1.260 3 (- 1.331 3)	0.34 00** * (20. 4575)	0.814 8
Belgium	Fear and Greed	0.006 2*** (24.8 344)	0.514 0*** (21.9 011)	0.531 4*** (24.7 496)	- 0.184 3 (- 0.349 7)	0.555 2 (0.973 9)	0.27 31** * (16. 6000)	0.737 6
	RSI	0.006 2*** (23.6	0.544 3*** (16.3	0.518 1*** (25.8	- 1.756 7**	0.662 5 (1.468	0.27 59** * (1.468	0.738 6

		361)	540)	796)	(- 2.244 1)	2)	(16. 1554)	
Italy	Fear and Greed	0.005 9*** (18.1 847)	0.383 5*** (19.3 284)	0.321 9*** (14.5 359)	0.456 4 (0.89 54)	0.543 6 (1.048 9)	0.38 36** * (17. 6026)	0.728 4
	RSI	0.005 9*** (18.2 696)	0.355 2*** (21.6 750)	0.438 0*** (8.55 90)	0.595 7 (1.55 00)	- 1.819 6* (- 1.881 0)	0.38 53** * (17. 3094)	0.725 5
Spain	Fear and Greed	0.006 2*** (24.4 776)	0.409 2*** (23.4 891)	0.378 6*** (22.4 685)	0.542 4 (1.44 11)	0.209 0 (0.681 5)	0.29 72** * (17. 3706)	0.705 5
	RSI	0.006 2*** (24.6 367)	0.393 4*** (24.6 089)	0.458 9*** (14.7 358)	0.528 2* (1.83 13)	- 1.435 3*** (- 2.630 4)	0.29 64** * (17. 3256)	0.704 2
Portugal	Fear and Greed	0.005 4*** (19.5 128)	0.429 1*** (16.9 632)	0.470 9*** (20.1 131)	- 1.427 5** (- 2.056 7)	- 1.294 2*** (0.492 0)	0.43 74** * (25. 5165)	0.492 0
	RSI	0.005 4*** (19.1 500)	0.443 9*** (13.9 713)	0.447 2*** (19.4 897)	- 1.846 0*** (- 2.862 7)	- 1.064 2** (- 1.991 9)	0.43 94** * (25. 7507)	0.491 2
Greece	Fear and Greed	0.011 3*** (21.5 279)	0.465 3*** (11.5 624)	0.379 7*** (8.52 53)	- 0.712 6 (- 0.860 0)	- 0.830 3 (- 0.950 3)	0.38 59** * (18. 6700)	0.338 7
	RSI	0.011 4*** (21.4 341)	0.439 8*** (10.6 954)	0.310 3*** (4.42 66)	- 0.768 2 (- 0.855 2)	0.397 9 (0.343 1)	0.38 43** * (18. 6211)	0.336 4
Cyprus	Fear and	0.009 0***	0.819 7***	0.938 1***	- 0.051	- 0.852	0.11 73**	0.843 1

	Greed	(20.8 650)	(32.7 588)	(41.4 980)	9 (- 0.189 1)	1*** (- 3.074 1)	* (9.7 560)	
	RSI	0.009 0*** (20.8 050)	0.808 0*** (17.3 221)	0.898 0*** (43.1 132)	0.042 7 (0.08 16)	- 0.554 4** (- 2.370 1)	0.11 90** * (9.7 862)	0.841 5
Nor way	Fear and Greed	0.008 3*** (25.1 450)	0.476 6*** (20.0 284)	0.443 7*** (18.5 461)	0.470 3 (1.50 50)	- 0.114 8 (- 0.322 2)	0.34 97** * (21. 1080)	0.716 1
	RSI	0.008 3*** (24.4 259)	0.469 8*** (19.4 013)	0.464 2*** (9.73 06)	0.142 6 (0.38 26)	- 0.587 6 (- 0.766 5)	0.35 03** * (20. 9176)	0.713 6
Swe den	Fear and Greed	0.008 2*** (15.6 493)	0.556 2*** (15.7 471)	0.454 2*** (10.0 171)	- 2.009 8*** (- 2.907 8)	- 1.001 7 (- 0.922 0)	0.44 48** * (17. 0689)	0.543 8
	RSI	0.008 2*** (15.4 046)	0.528 2*** (15.4 435)	0.426 8*** (3.84 48)	- 1.910 5*** (- 2.836 4)	0.219 7 (0.092 7)	0.44 68** * (17. 0541)	0.541 5
Finl and	Fear and Greed	0.006 7*** (23.7 559)	0.461 2*** (15.9 261)	0.520 9*** (20.7 940)	0.336 1 (0.46 83)	- 0.308 3 (- 0.515 6)	0.31 91** * (16. 5618)	0.680 4
	RSI	0.006 7*** (23.7 591)	0.505 8*** (12.0 914)	0.496 1*** (20.0 612)	- 1.318 6 (- 1.443 9)	0.094 0 (0.170 0)	0.31 88** * (16. 5393)	0.680 0
Den mar k	Fear and Greed	0.009 3*** (14.2 177)	0.342 7*** (4.76 25)	0.553 4*** (8.93 18)	3.676 7 (1.38 80)	- 2.102 3 (- 1.010 4)	0.23 86** * (7.9 790)	0.490 8
	RSI	0.006	0.509	0.570	-	-	0.34	0.668

		4*** (19.0 215)	8*** (16.3 539)	4*** (25.9 504)	0.734 9*** [- 2.641 4)	0.298 6 (- 0.544 4)	58** * (16. 8707)	9
Swit zerl and	Fear and Greed	0.006 3*** (15.0 745)	0.436 7*** (16.4 591)	0.515 1*** (15.4 503)	0.548 4 (1.52 17)	- 1.681 5* (- 1.650 7)	0.22 88** * (8.0 433)	0.688 4
	RSI	0.006 4*** (16.1 643)	0.325 9*** (4.18 75)	0.465 6*** (19.5 413)	4.577 9 (1.46 47)	- 0.106 2 (- 0.220 6)	0.22 66** * (8.0 350)	0.687 3
Russ ia	Fear and Greed	0.008 1*** (13.5 865)	0.781 5*** (16.1 841)	0.682 7*** (12.0 726)	- 0.676 8 (- 1.051 7)	2.759 1 (1.556 7)	0.27 34** * (9.5 467)	0.757 3
	RSI	0.008 1*** (12.3 219)	0.847 0*** (12.8 387)	0.710 7*** (10.6 063)	- 1.106 9 (- 1.435 9)	1.275 2 (0.599 9)	0.26 76** * (8.9 830)	0.755 7

Table 2. Investors' pessimism and market evolution

Note: ***indicates statistical significance at the 1% level, **indicates statistical significance at the 5% level, *indicates statistical significance at the 10% level.

The results presented in Table 2 report weak empirical evidence regarding investors' predisposition to make similar investment decisions in extreme market conditions. For the capital market from Sweden, Belgium, Portugal, Denmark the β_3 and β_4 coefficients are statistically meaningful and unfavorable, highlighting that the actuality of extreme conditions such as periods of market downturn and pessimism explains the reduction between return dispersions of individual stocks and market return, signaling that the investors tend to accept the collective behavior from the market. Once a downturn persists in the market, the pessimism could be caused by the economic environment becoming more uncertain, skepticism about growth prospects and the increasing of investors' fear regarding the future evolution of the companies.

$CSAD_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot R_{M,t} \cdot D_O^{Up} + \beta_2 \cdot R_{M,t} \cdot (1 - D_O^{Up}) + \beta_3 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 \cdot D_O^{Up} + \beta_4 \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 \cdot (1 - D_O^{Up}) + \beta_5 \cdot CSAD_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$								
Country	Investors' sentiment	β_0	β_1	β_2	β_3	β_4	β_5	R^2 (Adj.)
United Kingdom	Fear and Greed	0.0073 *** (27.66 37)	0.563 7*** (27.8 154)	0.624 0*** (22.5 184)	- 0.008 3 (- 0.016 7)	0.056 4 (0.07 03)	0.330 6*** (21.4 404)	0.7 488
	RSI	0.0073 *** (27.83 06)	0.579 3*** (28.6 414)	0.663 5*** (5.99 88)	- 0.171 3 (- 0.349 2)	7.450 0 (0.88 43)	0.327 7*** (21.1 705)	0.7 478
Germany	Fear and Greed	0.0116 *** (32.54 78)	0.472 3*** (16.7 410)	0.584 5*** (18.2 926)	1.281 3* (1.95 82)	0.008 6 (0.01 15)	0.320 5*** (22.6 369)	0.7 083
	RSI	0.0116 6*** (32.60 88)	0.494 9*** (17.6 878)	0.696 4*** (8.74 33)	1.001 8 (1.57 83)	- 1.967 3 (- 0.485 7)	0.320 4*** (22.7 557)	0.7 063
France	Fear and Greed	0.0059 *** (21.63 22)	0.527 2*** (26.5 766)	0.553 6*** (21.5 452)	0.444 2 (0.91 28)	0.455 2 (0.56 56)	0.341 1*** (20.3 895)	0.8 143
	RSI	0.0059 *** (21.45 20)	0.534 4*** (27.6 155)	0.630 5*** (10.8 126)	0.366 7 (0.76 54)	- 2.130 8 (- 1.097 0)	0.340 8*** (20.3 333)	0.8 141
Belgium	Fear and Greed	0.0063 *** (24.98 34)	0.493 7*** (19.3 462)	0.522 0*** (23.3 756)	1.303 3* (1.71 77)	0.241 9 (0.43 21)	0.270 8*** (16.5 387)	0.7 362
	RSI	0.0063 *** (24.54 15)	0.400 3*** (6.88 94)	0.518 5*** (23.8 681)	8.724 7** (2.49 03)	0.330 9 (0.61 12)	0.271 2*** (16.4 856)	0.7 363
Italy	Fear and Greed	0.0059 *** (18.06 62)	0.342 4*** (19.5 476)	0.403 4*** (17.5 512)	0.540 2 (1.29 91)	0.402 4 (0.71 84)	0.388 5*** (17.7 332)	0.7 267

	RSI	0.0059 *** (18.47 65)	0.354 3*** (20.3 668)	0.464 7*** (5.66 34)	0.448 0 (1.08 79)	3.186 6 (1.21 31)	0.386 3*** (17.9 391)	0.7 264
Spain	Fear and Greed	0.0062 *** (23.23 25)	0.389 0*** (21.7 498)	0.399 6*** (14.9 742)	0.421 3 (1.23 79)	1.060 8 (1.17 99)	0.298 2*** (17.2 591)	0.7 035
	RSI	0.0062 *** (23.40 23)	0.394 6*** (22.6 397)	0.435 7*** (6.60 80)	0.387 0 (1.15 14)	2.728 2 (0.96 03)	0.298 8*** (17.1 658)	0.7 036
Portugal	Fear and Greed	0.0053 *** (18.90 92)	0.528 3*** (9.64 52)	0.430 5*** (19.9 363)	- 2.138 6 (- 0.790 8)	- 1.120 3** (- 2.395 5)	0.440 1*** (25.8 595)	0.4 929
	RSI	0.0054 *** (19.32 76)	0.260 1*** (2.96 20)	0.438 3*** (20.3 688)	14.07 38 (3.92 75)	- 1.298 9*** (- 2.724 2)	0.440 5*** (25.9 011)	0.4 938
Greece	Fear and Greed	0.0114 *** (21.65 34)	0.430 3*** (10.5 756)	0.527 6*** (9.89 94)	- 0.694 2 (- 0.820 3)	- 4.334 5*** (- 2.846 8)	0.383 8*** (18.5 737)	0.3 361
	RSI	0.0114 *** (21.59 16)	0.432 0*** (10.8 917)	0.845 2*** (3.26 14)	- 0.831 0 (- 1.020 6)	- 25.69 68 (- 1.630 8)	0.383 5*** (18.5 584)	0.3 356
Cyprus	Fear and Greed	0.0090 *** (20.76 89)	0.974 1*** (34.7 856)	0.860 6*** (38.6 414)	- 1.032 4*** (- 3.200 2)	- 0.378 5 (- 1.422 5)	0.119 4*** (9.74 87)	0.8 427
	RSI	0.0090 *** (21.17 54)	1.106 7*** (21.3 865)	0.866 9*** (41.7 135)	- 2.792 6*** (- .3868 2)	- 0.313 3 (- 1.391 5)	0.118 7*** (9.76 76)	0.8 428
Norway	Fear and Greed	0.0083 *** (23.83 18)	0.437 4*** (18.8 901)	0.472 0*** (15.2 809)	0.337 0 (0.93 04)	2.173 5** (2.47 20)	0.354 6*** (21.4 827)	0.7 171

	RSI	0.0083 *** (24.29 45)	0.464 1*** (19.2 902)	0.366 5*** (6.19 41)	0.087 3 (0.23 48)	6.769 9*** (2.90 54)	0.353 2*** (21.2 198)	0.7 141
Sweden	Fear and Greed	0.0081 *** (15.63 11)	0.482 1*** (14.1 944)	0.631 0*** (12.9 201)	- 1.234 0* (- 1.859 1)	- 2.792 0** (- 2.105 2)	0.447 3*** (17.3 749)	0.5 459
	RSI	0.0082 *** (15.50 83)	0.519 0*** (15.0 488)	0.765 2*** (7.60 01)	- 1.707 1** (- 2.540 8)	- 7.932 4*** (- 2.762 2)	0.447 3*** (17.1 489)	0.5 419
Finland	Fear and Greed	0.0067 *** (23.56 22)	0.471 5*** (15.3 168)	0.488 8*** (19.9 203)	1.983 5** (2.01 84)	- 0.173 7 (- 0.323 8)	0.320 4*** (16.5 957)	0.6 810
	RSI	0.0067 *** (23.52 00)	0.469 5*** (9.71 50)	0.498 0*** (20.8 943)	1.669 0 (1.23 91)	- 0.112 0 (- 0.213 9)	0.318 3*** (16.3 520)	0.6 791
Denmark	Fear and Greed	0.0094 *** (13.76 13)	0.517 5*** (6.57 39)	0.428 9*** (5.75 28)	0.673 9 (0.20 59)	1.384 1 (0.52 61)	0.239 8*** (7.93 61)	0.4 855
	RSI	0.0064 *** (19.19 52)	0.559 0*** (10.7 811)	0.577 9*** (29.7 469)	1.589 4 (0.84 31)	- 0.869 7** (- 2.154 5)	0.344 0*** (16.7 208)	0.6 674
Switzerland	Fear and Greed	0.0064 *** (15.80 53)	0.530 6*** (14.0 561)	0.447 1*** (19.9 347)	- 0.450 3 (- 0.351 7)	0.287 3 (0.73 27)	0.227 0*** (8.16 51)	0.6 900
	RSI	0.0064 *** (16.30 73)	0.424 6*** (7.48 97)	0.463 9*** (20.1 825)	5.179 4* (1.86 43)	0.011 8 (0.02 70)	0.225 8*** (8.10 30)	0.6 867
Russia	Fear and Greed	0.0078 *** (13.82 28)	0.821 9*** (17.9 009)	0.768 8*** (19.7 037)	- 1.288 0 (- 0.981 0.251)	- 0.161 1 (- 0.251 0.251)	0.270 8*** (8.50 88)	0.7 541

				4)	9)			
	RSI	0.0079 *** (13.67 25)	0.794 4*** (15.3 145)	0.778 2*** (21.2 707)	- 0.871 2 (- 0.607 5)	- 0.255 2 (- 0.391 7)	0.269 7*** (8.45 58)	0.7 539

Table 3. Investors' optimism and market evolution

Note: ***indicates statistical significance at the 1% level, **indicates statistical significance at the 5% level, *indicates statistical significance at the 10% level.

Existing studies from the financial literature pointed out that the alternation of the boom periods when investors become more risk-averse with periods of economic downturn when stock prices record significant declines, which can lead to episodes of stock market panic provide the framework whether the herding behavior is influenced by the market dynamics and by extreme sentiments.

The coefficients which indicate the presence of herding behavior in the context of market upturn and optimism are negative and statistically significant for Sweden and Cyprus supporting the assumption according to which investors are likely to make similar investment decisions. A possible explanation for this result is that during upturn periods, there is growing confidence in the macroeconomic environment, the investors will disregard their own beliefs and analysis regarding the future evolution of the market and will follow the market consensus.

The assumption described at the beginning of this study according to which the sentiments influence the investors' behavior on stock markets is supported by the estimated results of the regression (3), which are presented in the below table.

$CSAD_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot D^S \cdot R_{M,t} + \beta_2 \cdot (1 - D^S) \cdot R_{M,t} + \beta_3 \cdot D^S \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 + \beta_4 \cdot (1 - D^S) \cdot (R_{M,t} - \bar{R}_M)^2 + \beta_5 \cdot CSAD_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$								
Country	Investors' sentiment	β_0	β_1	β_2	β_3	β_4	β_5	R^2 (Adj.)
United Kingdom	Fear and Greed	0.007 3*** (27.1 703)	0.632 7*** (22.3 276)	0.554 4*** (26.4 489)	- 0.790 0 (- 0.833 5)	0.16 63 (0.32 33)	0.332 0*** (21.4 302)	0.7 491
	RSI	0.007 3*** (27.7 701)	0.760 2*** (6.61 04)	0.579 6*** (28.6 418)	0.833 7 (0.09 98)	- 0.17 30 (- 0.35 26)	0.327 8*** (21.1 846)	0.7 479
Germany	Fear and Greed	0.011 5*** (32.6 246)	0.555 5*** (18.2 122)	0.471 4*** (16.2 131)	- 0.039 3 (- 15)	1.34 18* (1.94 15)	0.320 4*** (22.6 456)	0.7 067

				0.056 2)				
	RSI	0.011 6*** (32.5 978)	0.684 9*** (8.53 98)	0.495 3*** (17.6 869)	- 1.683 1 (- 0.426 3)	0.99 57 (1.56 83)	0.320 2*** (22.7 617)	0.7 062
France	Fear and Greed	0.005 8*** (21.3 572)	0.564 3*** (24.1 047)	0.521 9*** (25.1 730)	- 0.033 8 (- 0.051 9)	0.53 26 (1.04 92)	0.342 1*** (20.4 366)	0.8 145
	RSI	0.005 9*** (21.4 315)	0.651 6*** (11.0 191)	0.534 6*** (27.6 272)	- 3.081 6 (- 1.522 5)	0.36 54 (0.76 27)	0.340 9*** (20.3 446)	0.8 141
Belgium	Fear and Greed	0.006 4*** (24.9 108)	0.492 3*** (18.9 221)	0.517 8*** (22.0 664)	1.710 2* (1.94 26)	0.25 19 (0.44 08)	0.271 1*** (16.5 919)	0.7 364
	RSI	0.006 3*** (24.5 258)	0.428 0*** (7.11 20)	0.518 4*** (23.8 495)	7.174 1* (1.92 18)	0.33 41 (0.61 70)	0.271 3*** (16.4 990)	0.7 362
Italy	Fear and Greed	0.005 8*** (18.0 136)	0.371 3*** (17.4 274)	0.339 9*** (18.6 820)	0.899 0* (1.93 85)	0.53 92 (1.26 52)	0.388 4*** (17.6 384)	0.7 259
	RSI	0.005 9*** (18.4 717)	0.476 4*** (5.78 84)	0.354 5*** (20.3 780)	2.762 2 (1.06 15)	0.44 63 (1.08 36)	0.386 1*** (17.9 837)	0.7 264
Spain	Fear and Greed	0.006 1*** (22.9 801)	0.424 2*** (18.0 010)	0.390 2*** (21.5 183)	- 0.180 8 (- 0.256 6)	0.44 82 (1.31 52)	0.299 2*** (17.2 910)	0.7 033
	RSI	0.006 1*** (23.3 101)	0.462 7*** (7.18 39)	0.394 9*** (22.6 511)	1.550 2 (0.56 65)	0.38 52 (1.14 60)	0.299 0*** (17.1 751)	0.7 037
Portugal	Fear and Greed	0.005 3*** (19.2 463)	0.476 5*** (11.9 087)	0.436 8*** (19.5 879)	- 1.477 8 (- 0.878 4)	- 1.21 58** (- 2.52 96)	0.439 6*** (25.8 936)	0.4 913

	RSI	0.005 5*** (19.8 413)	0.232 3*** (2.84 38)	0.438 0*** (20.3 523)	14.83 31*** (4.51 19)	- 1.30 20** * (- 2.72 91)	0.440 3*** (26.0 969)	0.4 938
Greece	Fear and Greed	0.011 3*** (21.6 341)	0.474 9*** (9.16 85)	0.427 6*** (9.98 72)	- 2.291 8* (- 1.599 4)	- 0.67 45 (- 0.76 39)	0.383 9*** (18.5 987)	0.3 354
	RSI	0.011 4*** (21.5 547)	0.811 4*** (3.13 38)	0.432 4*** (10.8 988)	- 23.67 43 (- 1.530 5)	- 0.83 74 (- 1.02 87)	0.383 4*** (18.5 577)	0.3 355
Cyprus	Fear and Greed	0.009 0*** (20.8 837)	0.951 7*** (36.5 978)	0.849 0*** (36.0 669)	- 0.929 7*** (- 2.936 8)	- 0.25 23 (- 0.95 01)	0.117 7*** (9.64 41)	0.8 426
	RSI	0.009 1*** (21.2 472)	1.144 6*** (19.9 434)	0.862 7*** (41.5 844)	- 3.225 5*** (- 3.890 9)	- 0.25 92 (- 1.17 37)	0.116 4*** (9.59 95)	0.8 438
Norway	Fear and Greed	0.008 2*** (24.5 975)	0.477 3*** (17.3 445)	0.455 8*** (18.6 558)	0.532 4 (1.22 16)	0.07 29 (0.17 73)	0.353 0*** (21.2 947)	0.7 142
	RSI	0.008 3*** (24.2 720)	0.354 4*** (5.91 42)	0.463 9*** (19.2 900)	7.064 1*** (3.02 85)	0.08 72 (0.2 348)	0.352 9*** (21.2 093)	0.7 14 0
Sweden	Fear and Greed	0.008 0*** (15.4 045)	0.625 7*** (13.6 791)	0.477 5*** (13.7 117)	- 3.920 0*** (- 3.603 6)	- 1.00 31 (- 1.52 11)	0.446 4*** (17.3 886)	0.5 44 5
	RSI	0.008 1*** (15.5 179)	0.755 1*** (7.65 77)	0.519 3*** (15.0 640)	- 7.600 2*** (- 2.72 36)	- 1.71 18** (- 2.5 476)	0.407 7*** (17.1 583)	0.5 41 9
Finlan	Fear	0.006	0.494	0.490	0.575	-	0.319	0.6

d	and Gree d	7*** (23.4 650)	6*** (19.1 071)	6*** (18.8 729)	9 (0.81 37)	0.15 51 (- 0.26 61)	1*** (16.3 622)	79 7
	RSI	0.006 7*** (23.4 681)	0.480 2*** (10.3 098)	0.497 8*** (20.9 129)	1.317 1 (1.02 14)	- 0.10 77 (- 0.20 59)	0.318 4*** (16.3 616)	0.6 79 1
Denm ark	Fear and Gree d	0.009 4*** (13.8 795)	0.524 4*** (7.32 08)	0.407 3*** (5.36 96)	0.087 0 (0.03 28)	1.80 38 (0.6 621)	0.241 6*** (8.08 07)	0.4 87 4
	RSI	0.006 4*** (19.1 667)	0.579 1*** (10.4 756)	0.577 2*** (29.8 057)	0.997 7 (0.50 50)	- 0.85 50** (- 2.11 11)	0.344 1*** (16.7 268)	0.6 67 4
Switze rland	Fear and Gree d	0.006 3*** (15.5 282)	0.542 5*** (14.7 978)	0.443 1*** (19.4 069)	- 2.032 0* (- 1.857 4)	0.40 23 (1.0 943)	0.230 2*** (8.37 16)	0.6 90 0
	RSI	0.006 4*** (16.3 195)	0.486 1*** (7.15 24)	0.463 8*** (20.2 049)	2.628 1 (0.74 59)	0.01 86 (0.0 429)	0.225 7*** (8.10 50)	0.6 86 7
Russia	Fear and Gree d	0.007 9*** (13.9 925)	0.781 0*** (17.0 267)	0.794 7*** (18.1 651)	- 0.948 1 (- 0.726 6)	- 0.38 96 (- 0.57 84)	0.268 3*** (8.45 11)	0.7 54 2
	RSI	0.007 9*** (13.6 728)	0.786 5*** (15.5 337)	0.781 6*** (21.0 030)	- 0.866 5 (- 0.612 1)	- 0.28 07 (- 0.42 92)	0.269 6*** (8.44 97)	0.7 53 9

Table 4. The effects of investors' sentiment on herding behavior

Note: ***indicates statistical significance at the 1% level, **indicates statistical significance at the 5% level,
*indicates statistical significance at the 10% level.

The empirical evidence highlights a strong relationship between investors' sentiment and their herding behavior on the stock markets. The results indicate that optimism and

pessimism are powerful psychological features that determine the market participants to follow a collective behavior. In Greece, Cyprus, Sweden, Switzerland the β_3 coefficient is negative and statistically significant, the optimism having a more pronounced impact. The investors tend to mimic the financial strategies of other market participants in an overbought market.

The results indicate that the perception of the investors from Portugal, Sweden and Denmark is dominated by mistrust, fear and pessimism, which is reflected in their actions on the capital market. In Sweden, this market anomaly is more extensive and market participants exhibit the market behavior in both states: pessimism and optimism, fear and greed, panic and euphoria.

In the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Norway, Finland and Russia the coefficients β_3 and β_4 are not statistically significant, underlying that the frequency of investors' mimicry is lower, which can be attributed to a high level of financial education of the market participants, who make investment decisions based on their analysis, without following the actions of the other individual.

Conclusions

The investors' behavioral biases influence the stock market dynamics, in which context the herding behavior has the main role, being closely related to the price deviations from the basic value, the appearance of the speculative bubbles and the occurrence of the stock market crashes.

This study contributes to the existing financial literature by certifying the influence of the sentiments and extreme market conditions on investors' behavior from the European stock markets. In this regard, I have adapted the CSAD method developed by Chang *et al.* (2000) and improved by Yao *et. al* (2014), in order to reduce the multicollinearity and increase the predictive capacity of the model, by incorporating a variable, which quantifies the investors' sentiment. The argument which supports the selection of this methodology refers to the concept of herding behavior, whose presence is identified through the measurement of the return dispersions of individual stocks and market return. Complementary, under extreme sentiments and extreme market conditions (*i.e.*, periods of economic downturn, high volatility, financial crisis) the relationship between return dispersion of individual stocks and the market return is expected to be nonlinear, the CSAD method having the capacity to identify the presence of collective behavior on the market.

The obtained results validate the research hypotheses according to which the sentiments and the market conditions influence the presence of the investors' mimicry from the European stock markets, the investment decision-making process including both quantitative analysis and psychological factors.

The results obtained after running the nonlinear regressions support the existence of the investors' mimicry on the Swedish market, in both extreme sentiments and market conditions: pessimism and periods of economic downturn and optimism and periods of an economic upturn.

Two sentiment indicators have been included in the nonlinear regression, namely the Fear and Greed Index, calculated by Bloomberg and the Relative Strength Index. The empirical estimates provide evidence that investors' mimicry is influenced by optimism in Greece, Cyprus, Sweden, Switzerland, while the perception of the market participants from Portugal, Sweden and Denmark is dominated by pessimism, which is reflected in the investment decision making process. The results vary depending on the method which is used to quantify the investors' sentiment, the Fear and Greed Index captures the evidence of herding mainly when investors are optimistic.

The results obtained will find applicability in the activities performed by regulators, portfolio managers, financial analysts and statisticians. The information related to the investors' tendency to follow a collective behavior on the market is relevant for the international portfolio diversification, depending on the economic conditions, connections between asset classes and markets and investors' sentiment. The future research directions will focus on the impact of investors' sentiment on the risk premium dynamics and the portfolio optimization strategies.

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CASH SAVINGS AND PRICE INFORMATIVENESS: THE CASE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY STOCK MARKETS

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Abstract. The study investigates the relationship between cash savings and price informativeness on a sample of 125 companies from the renewable energy sector. These companies are engaged in the generation and distribution of renewable and clean energy using alternative energy sources like solar, wind, biofuels, biomass, hydroelectric and geothermal in order to meet the need for a low-carbon society. Investment in renewable energy has increased rapidly in the last decades as a response to the unequivocal climate change. Investors worldwide recognize the importance of the sector and the opportunities for value creation it presents. In this framework, the companies' development and success is closely related to the resource management. Those companies that have the means to pursue new solutions and/or technology that encounter the global challenges and concerns are in better position to grow and expand. By focusing on the informational role played by stock prices on cash savings, this paper provides evidences that decisions on corporate cash savings depend on managers learning from the stock market. Using two measures of price informativeness – idiosyncratic volatility or firm-specific variation and price non-synchronicity – and a set of control variables designed to capture a number of factors that affect cash savings decisions that may also directly correlate with stock price and its informativeness we follow Chen, Goldstein, and Jiang (2007) and examine the relation between the informativeness of stock prices and the sensitivity of savings to price. Our unbalanced panel results show that firms appear to save more when they experience positive shocks to their stock price, therefore cash savings become significantly more sensitive to stock price when firm-specific return variation is high. Therefore, prices with large content of private information provide managers with new information, which, in turn, affects their savings behavior.

Keywords: price informativeness, renewable energy, cash savings, stock markets.

Introduction

In recent years many finance researchers have been trying to understand if and how managers learn from the evolution of their stock price on the market. The stock price reflects various categories of information via the trading activity of different investors and managers may not have yet some of these specific information. This new information may concern financing opportunities, future investment [see Dow and Gorton, (1997), Subrahmanyam and Titman, (1999)], the future demand for the firm's products, firms' relationships with their different stakeholders or future competitive changes. Thus, to the extent that prices really inform managers, cash savings and other corporate decisions should be influenced by the informational content of prices. In addition, if managers learn from the stock market and use this information properly they can adjust their decisions and allocate the resources more efficiently, which, in turn, it reflects on the firm value. Understanding this learning process is

very important in assessing the impact of financial markets on the real economy. Yet, researchers have been concerned so far with the effects of managerial learning on corporate investment [Durnev, Morck and Yeung (2004), Luo (2005), Chen, Goldstein and Jiang (2007), Bakke and Whited (2010)] and have focused very little on the economic mechanisms underlying the companies' saving process.

This study provides strong evidence that managers learn from their stock price when they make corporate savings decisions and contributes to the literature in several ways. First, by focusing on the informational role played by stock prices on cash savings behaviors, the paper highlights that the availability of information appears to be a key factor in explaining the firm's cash policy and fills the gap in the existing literature on this subject. Both theory and economic intuition show that managers can collect a large diversity of useful information from the stock price that includes also the information that has not been incorporated into the price yet. Because the managerial learning process is more intense when a larger fraction of private information from investors is impounded in stock prices, cash savings should be more sensitive to price when the price contains more private information, i.e. information that is new to managers. Second, it is the first study that examines the relation between cash savings and price informativeness focusing on renewable energy stock markets. We choose this sector due to its growing importance and impact on our everyday life. According to a report of United Nations Environment Programme, investment in sustainable energy is rapidly increasing and continues to attract strong capital investment at all stages of the financing lifecycle as a response to a number of global challenges and concerns, including climate change, increasing energy demand and energy security. The investment community recognizes the importance of the sector and the opportunities for value creation it presents. Consumers and companies are supporting the roll out of a new energy infrastructure and a change in individual and corporate behavior. Most importantly, governments and policy makers are introducing legislation and support mechanisms to accelerate the development of the sector. In this framework, the companies' development and success is closely related to the resource management. Those companies that have the means to pursue new solutions and/or technology that encounter the global challenges are in better position to grow and expand. Cash savings provide an important advantage over product market rivals [(Frésard (2010), Boutin et al. (2009)], represent a useful tool to manage firms' relationship with their suppliers [Itzkowitz (2010)] and may counteract costly or limited access to external financing (Almeida, Campello, and Weisbach (2004), Acharya, Almeida, and Campello (2006)].

Literature review

The idea that managers learn from the stock markets relies primarily on Hayek's (1945) work. He intuited that managers can improve the allocation of resources by analyzing the informational content of stock prices which efficiently aggregate information from various participants. Grossman and Stiglitz (1980) or Kyle (1985) sustain that this aggregation is due to the trading activity of diverse speculators that transmit their private information into market prices, information that managers may not possess, and thus help reduce the information asymmetry between them. Dow and Gorton (1997) developed a theoretical model that, in equilibrium, reflects the transfer of important information from the stock market to managers guiding them to better corporate investment. Similar, Subrahmanyam and Titman (1999) conclude that between public and private financing, the former one enriches the informational content of stock prices. Thus, when information is very important for the allocation of corporate resources public financing is preferred. Other theoretical studies that reveal the impact of financial markets on the real economy reflected in improved efficiency of managers' decisions and increased firm value due to the transfer of information via stock prices are those of Morck, Shleifer, and Vishny (1990), Dye and Sridhar (2002), Stein (2003), Goldstein and Guembel (2008), Foucault and Gehrig (2008) or Chang and Yu (2004).

On the other hand, the vast majority of the empirical studies have exclusively and surprisingly focused on the relation between the informational content of stock prices and investment decisions. For example, Durnev, Morck and Yeung (2004) show that more informative stock prices have a significant impact on the efficiency of firms' investments. A similar result is obtained by Chen, Goldstein, and Jiang (2007) or Bakke and Whited (2010). They conclude that managers use the information they extract from observing their stock price to adjust their investment decisions. Foucault and Frésard (2010) analyze a sample of foreign firms that cross-list on U.S. exchanges and highlight the positive impact of stock price on corporate investment. But, given the fact that managers may benefit from new information reflected in stock prices, informative prices are likely to influence other decisions managers have to make.

Besides their well-known impact on future investment, we show that saving decisions are sensitive to the information that managers learn from the stock market. In this context, because cash savings are related to investment prospects, they will react to price if prices transmit important signals about future prospects. Numerous studies document that companies accumulate cash in order to finance future investment, therefore, cash savings can be considered a specific type of investment in financial assets. For example, Almeida, Campello, and Weisbach (2004) and Acharya, Almeida, and Campello (2007) sustain that firms are cautious and save cash to finance future projects especially when other sources of future financing are uncertain. Dasgupta, Noe, and Wang (2008) or Denis and Sibilkov (2009) reach similar conclusions. In addition, to the extent that stock prices comprise different strategic dimensions (e.g. the evolution of other competitors in the product market or changes in the relationships with employees and suppliers) cash savings can be sensitive to the informational content of prices.

Data and methodology

3.1. The data

The study was conducted on an unbalanced panel of 125 equities from 17 developed markets and 7 developing markets over 7 years, from January 2013 to December 2019. In forming the sample, we started with all the stocks listed on the stock markets which are included in the field of renewable energy and could be found on Thomson Eikon database, respectively a total of 393 titles. The final sample of 125 titles was obtained by applying cumulatively three types of filters. First, for the period 2013-2019 we selected those stocks for which there were data available for the study variables in at least 5 of the 7 years. In the second stage we applied the filters proposed by Jin and Myers (2006) - each year, we removed the stocks that were not listed for at least 26 weeks - obtaining a sample of 158 companies. In the third stage, because of the unavailability of data for control variables, we removed several companies from the developing markets, obtaining the final sample of 125 stocks from 17 developed markets and 7 developing countries.

Table 1 presents the structure of the final sample and shows the countries, the name of the stock markets where the stocks are listed, the stock market indices on these markets and the number of stocks on each market. For each of the 125 companies we downloaded from Thomson Eikon the weekly close prices (Friday to Friday) in order to determine price informativeness measures and accounting data.

Country	Stock market	Stock market index	No. stocks	Equally-weighted R ²	Equally-weighted log($\sigma_{\epsilon,i}^2$)
Developed countries					
Australia	Australian Stock Exchange	S&P/ASX 20 Index	2	0,2023	0,0976

	Ltd/National Stock Exchange of Australia Ltd				
Belgium	Euronext Brussels	BEL20 Index	1	0,1854	0,0888
Canada	The Toronto Stock Exchange/TSX Venture Exchange - NEX	TSX-Toronto Stock Exchange 300 Composite Index	3	0,2775	0,1065
Denmark	OMX Nordic Exchange Copenhagen A/S	OMX Copenhagen 20 Index	1	0,3910	0,0431
France	Euronext Paris	CAC 40 Index	3	0,2363	0,0709
Germany	Frankfurt Stock Exchange	Deutsche Boerse DAX Index	4	0,2021	0,1491
	Xetra	Deutsche Boerse DAX Index	4	0,2674	0,0543
Hong Kong	The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Ltd	Hang Seng Index	17	0,2354	0,0816
Italy	Milan Stock Exchange	FTSE MIB Index	1	0,2764	0,0638
Japan	Tokyo Stock Exchange	Nikkei 225 Index	4	0,2636	0,0711
Netherlands	Euronext Amsterdam	Amsterdam Exchanges Index	1		
Norway	Oslo Stock Exchange	OBX Price Index	1	0,2677	0,1025
Portugal	Euronext Lisbon	Euronext Lisbon PSI 20 Index	1	0,2867	0,0663
Singapore	Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Ltd	FTSE Straits Times Index	2	0,2177	0,1003
Spain	Madrid Stock Exchange	IBEX 35 Index(L)	1	0,4343	0,04426
Sweden	OMX Nordic Exchange Stockholm AB - cash	OMX Stockholm 30 Index	2	0,2291	0,1170
UK	London Stock Exchange	FTSE 100 Index	7	0,2260	0,0882
US	NYSE/NASDAQ	Standard&Poor's 500/Nasdaq 100 index	20	0,2935	0,0889

Developing countries

China	Shanghai Stock Exchange/ Shenzhen Stock Exchange	Shanghai 50	23	0,3666	0,0578
India	BSE Ltd/National Stock Exchange of India	Nifty 50 Index	8	0,2601	0,08811
Korea (South)	Korea Exchange – KSE/ Korea Exchange - KOSDAQ	Kospi 11 Index	7	0,3112	0,0593
Philippines	Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	PSE Composite Index	1	0,1826	0,0675
Poland	Warsaw Stock Exchange	WIG20 Index	1	0,1665	0,1084
Taiwan	Taiwan Stock Exchange	Taiwan Weighted Index	9	0,3021	0,0565
Thailand	The Stock Exchange of Thailand	SET Index	2	0,2708	0,0579

Table 1. Sample structure

3.2. Measures of stock price informativeness

To determine the informational content of stock price we use two measures: price non-synchronicity and idiosyncratic volatility. These two measures are interchangeable only to some extent, the role of the informational environment in choosing the best proxy for firm-specific returns variations being very important [Bartram et al. (2012), Li et al. (2014)]. For example, when the information environment is heterogeneous idiosyncratic volatility could be a better proxy than price non-synchronicity [Zhang et al. (2016)].

In computing the first measure, we estimate annually the coefficient of determination from the expanded market model of Jin and Myers (2006):

$$r_{i,j,t} = \alpha_{i,j} + \beta_{1,i}r_{L,j,t-2} + \beta_{2,i}r_{L,j,t-1} + \beta_{3,i}r_{L,j,t} + \beta_{4,i}r_{L,j,t+1} + \beta_{5,i}r_{L,j,t+2} + \beta_{6,i}r_{US,t-2} + \beta_{7,i}r_{US,t-1} + \beta_{8,i}r_{US,t} + \beta_{9,i}r_{US,t+1} + \beta_{10,i}r_{US,t+2} + \varepsilon_{i,j,t}$$

where $r_{i,j,t}$ is the weekly return of stock i of country j in week t , $r_{L,j,t}$ is the weekly local market return of country j in week t , and $r_{US,t}$ is the weekly US market return in week t . $R_{i,j}^2$ is an inverse measure of price informativeness, thus we compute the difference $1 - R_j^2$ to obtain the price non-synchronicity measure, where R_j^2 is the annually equally-weighted average of the $R_{i,j}^2$ s of the individual stocks in country j . A higher value of $1 - R_j^2$ indicates that the stock price is more informative, more firm-specific information being embedded into the stock price, i.e. a significant portion of a stock return variation is not explained by market movements. Because $1 - R_j^2$ measure is bounded within the [0,1] interval, in regressions we used the logistic transformation of it:

$$\psi_j = \log\left(\frac{1 - R_j^2}{R_j^2}\right)$$

The second measure of stock price informativeness($\log(\sigma_{\varepsilon,j}^2)$), idiosyncratic volatility or firm-specific variation, is the logarithm of average residual sum of squares from the market model of Jin and Myers (2006). In fact, ψ_j is the result of a balance between firm-specific variation and market-wide variation:

$$\psi_j = \log\left(\frac{1 - R_j^2}{R_j^2}\right) \log\left(\frac{\sigma_{\varepsilon,j}^2}{\sigma_{m,j}^2}\right) = \log(\sigma_{\varepsilon,j}^2) - \log(\sigma_{m,j}^2)$$

3.3. Panel methodology

We follow Chen, Goldstein, and Jiang (2007) and examine the relation between the informativeness of stock prices and the sensitivity of savings to price, through the following model:

$$Savings_{i,t} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 Q_{i,t-1} + \beta_2 PI_{i,t-1} + \beta_3 (PI_{i,t-1} \cdot Q_{i,t-1}) + \delta \cdot Firm_Control_{t-1} + \eta_t + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

All the variables are described in Table 2.

First, we include $PI_{i,t-1}$ separately in order to control for the impact of private information on cash savings. Second, we include the matrix *Firm_Control* in order to control for several factors that affect cash savings decisions and may also be directly correlate with stock price and its informational content. Specifically, we take into account the *Size* of the company to eliminate its impact on the true need to accumulate cash. We include *Cash*, the cash holdings at the beginning of period, because the corporate decision to save or not depends on the

available stock of cash. Because it is indicated to maintain a precautionary attitude when transforming cash inflows into cash savings, we include cash flow (CF) as a control variable (Almeida et al., 2004, Riddick and Whited, 2009). We account for time-invariant firm heterogeneity and time effects by including firm fixed effects as well as time dummies (α_i and η_t). We follow Petersen (2009) and the standard errors are double clustered at country and year levels. Finally, we allow the error term to be serially correlated for the same company. In our model, the coefficient β_3 presents the main interest. If it is significantly positive, then savings decisions are influenced by the amount of private information impounded in the price.

Variable	Description
PI	Price informativeness measure (price non-synchronicity/ idiosyncratic volatility).
Cash	Cash and short-term investment scaled by total assets.
Total assets	Total assets (in million USD).
Savings	Cash and short-term investment minus 1-year lagged Cash and short-term investment divided by 1-year lagged total assets.
Q	Market value of equity plus book value of assets minus book value of equity minus deferred taxes, scaled by total assets.
Ψ_t	Price non-synchronicity – firm-specific return variation computed as $\Psi_t = \ln(\frac{1-R_{i,t}^2}{R_{i,t}^2})$, where $R_{i,t}^2$ represents the R^2 from the expanded market model proposed by Jin and Myers (2006).
$\log(\sigma_{\varepsilon,j}^2)$	Idiosyncratic volatility – logarithm of average residual sum of squares from the expanded market model proposed by Jin and Myers (2006).
Size	Logarithm of total assets.
CF	Sum of net income before extraordinary items and depreciation and amortization scaled by total assets.
Capex	Capital expenditures computed as capital expenditures minus sales of property, plant, and equipment divided by total assets.
NWC	Net working capital computed as current noncash assets minus current liability divided by total assets.
ΔNWC	Change in net working capital ($NWC_t - NWC_{t-1}$).
ShortDebt	Short-term debt computed as short-term debt divided by total assets.
Δ ShortDebt	Change in short-term debt computed ($ShortDebt_t - ShortDebt_{t-1}$).
Individualism	Cultural dimension from Hofstede 2010.
UAI	Cultural dimension from Hofstede 2010.

Table 2. Variable description

Results

Model (1) from Table 3 (in Table 4 is missing because the estimations would be identical) presents the results of a simple OLS regression of cash savings (*Savings*) on stock price (Q). We observe a positive and significant relation between *Savings* and Q , with a coefficient for Q estimated at 0.0029, significant at 1% level. The result is similar with that obtain by Almeida, Campello, and Weisbach (2004) and Riddick and Whited (2009) and confirms that savings are positively correlated with prices. The more informative is the price, respectively the larger is the content of private information embedded in price, the more intense is the managerial learning process, which, in turn, influences the savings behavior. When firm-specific return variation is high, cash savings are more sensitive to stock price, therefore firms apparently save more when they experience positive shocks to their stock price. This effect has a small but non-negligible economic magnitude.

Model (2) from Table 3, respectively Model (1) from Table 4 display the central finding of this paper. The coefficient for $PI \cdot Q$ is positive and statistically significant (0.0002 with a t-statistic of 2.32, respectively 0.0019 with a t-statistic of 2.96). Cash savings are more sensitive

to stock price when the price contains a larger amount of new information which means in fact private information. Managers appear to save more following a positive signal given by the market price, when this signal contains a larger amount of private investors' information. After we introduced more control variables in regression, the results remain unchanged. (models (3), (4), (5)). In addition, regardless the measure of price informativeness, the positive coefficient for $PI \cdot Q$ remains significant.

	Dependent variable: Savings (annual change in cash holdings)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Q_{t-1}	0.0029*** (4.15)	0.0029*** (3.44)	0.0028*** (2.73)	0.0023** (2.50)	0.0022** (2.43)
PI_{t-1}		0.0619 (1.49)	0.0763* (1.88)	0.0422* (1.93)	0.0398* (1.69)
$Q_{t-1} \times PI_{t-1}$		0.0002** (2.32)	0.0002** (2.02)	0.0001* (1.96)	0.0001** (2.22)
CF_t			0.0056 (1.55)	-0.0344 (-0.85)	-0.0305 (-1.06)
$Size_t$			-0.0103 (-0.57)	-0.0137 (-1.02)	-0.0169 (-1.53)
$Cash_{t-1}$			0.3629* (1.80)	0.2223* (1.69)	0.2007 (1.54)
$Capex_t$				-0.0130 (-1.07)	-0.0092 (-1.19)
ΔNWC_t				0.0586 (0.41)	0.0549 (0.48)
$\Delta ShortDebt_t$				-0.0481 (-0.41)	-0.0500 (-0.52)
Individualism					0.0003 (0.92)
UAI					-0.0007 (-1.48)
Country effect	FE	FE	FE	FE	RE
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R - squared	0.021	0.036	0.059	0.412	0.415
Observations	857	834	712	706	706

Note: $PI = \log(\sigma_{\varepsilon,j}^2)$

Table 3. Idiosyncratic volatility and Saving-to-Price Sensitivity

	Dependent variable: Savings (annual change in cash holdings)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Q_{t-1}	-0.0005 (-0.40)	-0.0012 (-0.79)	-0.0024** (-2.03)	-0.0029* (-1.85)
PI_{t-1}	-0.0226 (-0.93)	-0.0442 (-1.43)	-0.0251 (-1.44)	-0.0393* (-1.90)
$Q_{t-1} \times PI_{t-1}$	0.0019*** (2.96)	0.0023*** (2.85)	0.0027*** (4.36)	0.0028*** (3.99)
CF_t		0.0067 (1.42)	-0.0346 (-0.84)	-0.0300 (-1.04)
$Size_t$		-0.0224 (-0.90)	-0.0207 (-1.41)	-0.0249*** (-2.16)
$Cash_{t-1}$		0.3592* (1.70)	0.2211 (1.61)	0.1950 (1.47)
$Capex_t$			-0.0142 (-1.12)	-0.0098 (-1.22)
ΔNWC_t			0.0634 (0.44)	0.0591 (0.52)

$\Delta ShortDebt_t$			-0.0448 (-0.38)	-0.0470 (-0.49)
Individualism				0.0008*** (2.69)
UAI				-0.0009* (-1.76)
Country effect	FE	FE	FE	RE
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R - squared	0.022	0.049	0.410	0.415
Observations	834	712	706	706

Note: PI = ψ_t

Table 4. Non-synchronicity and Saving-to-Price Sensitivity

Conclusions

This study analysis the relation between price informativeness and cash savings on a sample of 125 companies from the renewable energy sector over the 2003 – 2009 time period. The results suggest that more informative stock prices are associated with more efficient decisions and managers use the information they learn from the stock market and adjust their saving behavior accordingly. This result remains unchanged regardless the estimation methodology and the proxy for the amount of information embedded in price. This fact is not surprising because similar conclusions have been obtained in case of other industrial sectors.

For future research, there are some challenging directions to explore. First, it would be interesting to investigate if the managerial learning process also influences other decisions besides the ones related to cash savings, such as dividend policy or capital structure decisions. Second, it would be necessary to understand what kind of information managers really learn from observing the behavior of their stock price in order to examine how this information is transposed into better corporate decisions.

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THE LIFE CYCLE OF SHOPPING CENTERS

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Abstract. *In this paper, I am addressing the concept of shopping center life cycle, as shopping centers are present in our day-to-day existence. Either we go shopping just for basic products at the hypermarket, or searching for the latest apparel collection from a specific brand, having dinner/lunch or just cruising to enjoy entertainment or other services, we get to spend an important amount of our time in direct interaction with the shopping centers and their facilities. Nowadays, the shopping centers are successful retail concepts registering the highest customer traffic in each town where they are located. It is a reality that once the shopping centers sector has evolved, the people's life has continuously changed towards adaption to this new attraction. The precise moment in which a shopping center actually is, reflects the specific stage (out of its circuition) and this is under the direct influence of several specific market factors and, as well, the particular strategies developed by management team. Analyzing this concept of life cycle attached to the shopping center, we get the chance to find answers related to the reason why some malls come to an end and die, while some other are still raising, continuing and claiming their success. Similar to an individual, a shopping mall is to be considered under a continuous evolution process, within its entire existence.*

Keywords: shopping center, life cycle, retail schemes, retail strategy.

Introduction

Shopping centers sector has known an important development in the United States starting with the 1950's and, in the following times, this area has registered one of the most dynamic evolution reaching today's status. We do agree that a new product, service or as it is in this case, a new retail concept, has the potential to attract initially many clients mainly due to its novelty. But later situation might change and evolve differently, if strategies are not developed accordingly to the market situation. What happens with the customers after a certain period of time, how does the traffic evolve for the shopping centers? Customers might get bored of the existing facilities or of the overall tenant mix, so they might switch for the competitors' project or for another retail channel. How and when should the owners of the shopping centers react with specific strategies (like refurbishing the existing facilities or updating the overall leasing strategy)? Like this, they are trying to improve the overall medium of the center in order to maintain the highest level of interest from the customers' side. As any product available for the customers, it is realistic to consider that the shopping centers do age as well. And, if this is the situation, then which are the specific stages of the life cycle? Are there specific factors that prove direct influence into which stage a center is to be positioned?

Developing their strategy with the right information is crucial both for the investors (owners) and for the managers (operation side) of the shopping centers. Depending on the specific life cycle in which the project is claimed to be, several approaches can and should be addressed in order to maximize the overall performance.

Literature review

While in some countries this field of retail represented by the shopping centers has known a wide expansion, in other countries this sector is still in the emerging phase. In this respect, Abrudan and Dabija (2009, p. 536) mention that “the experience of developed countries, (...), may be also transferred to emerging markets” and, like this, to be proactive in the future challenges that might rise ahead. According to Kang and Kim (1999, p. 45), having at its base the product life cycle as a concept, they indicate that “industry experts often view the life cycle of shopping centres as a four-stage process – innovation, growth, maturity and decline”. In same respect, Mushirivindi, Prinsloo and Cloete (2018, p. 190) cite the work of Cloete (2016: 57, 60), “a property is a product like any other product and therefore exhibits the stages of the product life cycle viz. inception, development, maturity and scrapping/recycling”.

Having all these in mind, it gets clear that identifying the right stage of the life cycle becomes a necessity and, in this direction also, Abrudan and Dabija (2009, p. 536) have postulated that „it is important to identify the stages of their life cycle, characteristics and appropriate strategies for each one, so that the profitable period of shopping centers can be extended as much as possible.”

If we take into account the approach proposed by Lowry (1997, p. 79), please see Table 1 below, we get to have all the involved variables and the generated output for each different stage of the life cycle:

ATTRIBUTES		STAGE OF THE LIFE CYCLE			
	Important considerations	Launch/ Innovation	Growth/ Accelerated development	Maturity	Decline
Market factors	Number of competing centers	Very few	Rapid growth	Many of the same type of center	Many same and newer types
	Amount of shopper traffic generated	Increases rapidly	Steadily increases	Stable amount	Steadily decreases
	Rate of sales growth	Very rapid	Rapid	Moderate to slow	Slow or negative
	Vacancy rate	Low	Very low	Moderate	High
	Control exerted by developers	Extensive	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate
Shopping center developer strategies	Advertising and promotional activities	Extensive	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate
	Renovation of facilities	None	Minor modifications	Maintenance of existing facilities	Neglect or extensive reformatting
	Efforts to attract new retail tenants	Extensive	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive
	Rental rates	High	High	Competitive	Low
	Length of lease	Long	Long	Moderate	Short
Retailer tenant strategies	Advertising and promotional activities	Extensive to create awareness	Moderate, to draw greater interest	Extensive, to compete on price	Moderate, to remind of sale price
	Special sales and price discounts	Few	Moderate	Extensive	Extensive
	Merchandise offerings	Preplanned variety and assortment	Variety and assortment to the market	Stable variety and assortment	Reduced variety and assortment
	Store size and layout	Prototype model	Adjusted to meet market	Stable size	Scaled down

			demand		
	Type of store	Entrepreneurial	Aggressive	Professional	Caretaker

Source: adapted from Lowry, J.R., The Life Cycle of Shopping Centers, Business Horizons, January-February 1997, pp.79

Table 1. Stage of the life cycle

In accordance to Lowry's (1997) approach, the stages of the life cycle are under direct influence of several factors like: market factors, shopping center, developer strategies and retailer tenant strategies.

Why should anyone pay attention to the stages of the life cycle? Well, according to Abrudan and Dabija (2009, p. 539), they indicate that "*a shopping center with a timeworn and careless look is the most vulnerable to new, modern competitors that offer modern, pleasant facilities, beautiful stores, with an attractive assortment of merchandise*".

From Kang and Kim's (1999, p. 45) work, citing Lowry approach, we get to see the positioning of different retail formats since their early inception – please see the following table:

Shopping Center Type	Major Benefit	Life Cycle			
		Innovation	Growth	Maturity	Decline
Neighborhood Center	Convenience	late 1940s	present		
Community Center	Assortment Convenience	early 1950s	1960-1980s	mid 1990s	present
Regional Center	Assortment Entertainment	mid 1950s	1960-1980s	mid 1990s	present
Superregional Center	Assortment Entertainment	early 1970s	present		
Theme/Festival Center	Entertainment	mid 1970s	mid 1980s	mid 1990s	present
Outlet Center	Value Assortment	early 1980s	present		
Fashion/Specialty Center	Fashion Assortment	early 1980s	mid 1980s	present	
Power Center	Value convenience	mid 1980s	present		

Source: as adapted after Kang and Kim (1999, p. 46) citing Lowry 1997

Table 2. The Life Cycle of Shopping Centers – evolution for some retail schemes

Not each single property will reach the same stage of the life cycle and in this regard, also, Mushirivindi, Prinsloo and Cloete (2018, p. 191) have postulated that "*property becomes older, it reaches maturity and ageing, with some properties reaching this stage sooner than others...*".

Now, getting back to the specific stages of the life cycle attached to the shopping centers and their particular characteristic, we can find out that during:

- **Launch/Innovation** – at this stage, there are few competitors. Starting from this point, new developers are getting aware of the success of the new formats so, they will start to build and deliver new retail projects into the market. Customers are attracted by the new formats therefore; the tenants are registering higher volume sales.
- **Growth stage/Accelerated** – this stage is best described by the increasing level of the competition for similar retail schemes/shopping formats – therefore, many more projects are to be delivered in this time frame, sales are still going well, but under the threat of the increasing competition.
- **Maturity** stage proves to have a larger number of retail schemes/retail projects of the same type, each one of them fighting to attract and retain the customers in its own

yard. Within this period of time, we come to face situations in which centers are having their retail area over crossed by other retail projects (the market share is getting narrower) – on that account, the possibilities to increase the revenues are limited, so shopping centers must address different strategies to maintain their market share.

- **Decline** stage proves to be a consequence of the registered high level of competition. Normally, having reached this stage it means that there is no turning back for the shopping center consequently, only two alternatives have remained: either to convert the center into something different or just to sell it for another business. The first alternative (converting the center) involves an important investment from the owner's side, while the second alternative might offer the possibility to gain money out of the selling process and, afterwards, having this capital reinvest in some other business.

If in the case of the decline stage, the situation narrows, not giving to many possibilities for growth and, given the maturity stage, the mall owners should pay attention to the necessity of intervening through specific activities (refurbishment, leasing, marketing, etc.). We know that a shopping center is under a continuous maintenance activity, but in the event of the refurbishment, how soon and how frequent should be done?

On one hand, renovating a mall to frequently can prove to be unprofitable, but on the other hand also Wong and Norman (1994, p.33) have stated that if you delay to much the renovations than "*the net rental incomes receivable from the unrenovated mall will be decreasing and the costs of renovation will be increasing*". Also, they have concluded that "*the decision to renovate a mall is not random. It depends on a number of factors including the rate of the depreciation of net rental incomes, the level and rate of change of renovation costs, discount rates and changing market conditions*".

It is clear that refurbishment comes as a necessity in order "*to avoid declining cash flows because of ageing, the building requires renewal or refurbishment*" is also the opinion of Mushirivindi, Prinsloo and Cloete (2018, p. 191) indicates.

Deciding on the right moment to invest into the refurbishment process of a shopping mall is not an easy task, not depending on the experience of the management team therefore, many scenarios might arise and the management should try to pick the best possible solution. Keeping a continuous monitoring on all the sensitive details involved by the shopping center operational side, gives us a wider image related to the overall evolution and actual stage of the life cycle of the shopping.

Conclusion

It is clear that, no depending the phase/stage we are addressing to, if we take the example of an existing shopping center versus the new player that enters the market, the competition between these two players will embrace different facets. For instance, the existing shopping center could benefit from the loyalty of its existing customers as they get accustomed over the time with its offerings, while in the case of the new shopping center (being delivered recently) the novelty of the concept, the latest design and architecture together, with latest tenant mix, will make a huge impression on the customers, attracting them to experience and, with high probability, to be retained. Having this in mind, the owners of the existing shopping centers must invest in order to update their overall facilities (both from the technical and design perspective) and potential offerings (keeping updated the tenant mix). A non-reaction approach will most likely impact highly negatively these retail owners and therefore, their future perspective is under serious discussion.

Having all these previous mentioned data in front of us, it comes clear that there exists a direct link between the level of the competition (the increased number of shopping centers) and the pace/rhythm of the registered evolution between the stages of the life cycle. In other

words, with an increased level of competition the existing retail formats will more likely face/pass through an accelerated evolution between stages.

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DATA PREPROCESSING TECHNIQUES FOR XGBoost

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Abstract *Big data is important for the insurance company to reduce operational costs, increase efficiency, and ensure competitive rates. In this paper, we will try to model the premium value of auto insurance through machine learning techniques. The first step is the data preprocessing, this will prepare the input data, so we could run the model and must be done carefully because it is very important to train a model as accurately as possible. The way we convert and preprocess the data may differ from one model to another; in this case, we need to know exactly what to look for and how to transform the input to be exactly what is expected. When we start to develop the machine learning model, we have to define very well the expected capabilities. In this way, we should know if the input dataset has all the information needed, may be defined as the most representative features and useless data from the data source, or extract more information from the data that is already available.*

As a case study, we will implement the XGBoost model using AWS Sagemaker and the preprocessing will be done in Jupiter Notebook using Python code and more specific the sklearn library. XGBoost is an optimized distributed gradient boosting used because of its speed and performance. The fact that the predictions are based on regression, is expected that his input will be constructed only from numerical variables, in this case, the categorical variables were transformed using One Hot Encoding. The numerical features were analyzed to see if normalization or rescaling is needed and finally the data set is split into training and testing. The Xgboost model can handle missing data by default. In the end, the data will be prepared for training.

Keywords: Machine Learning, Preprocessing, XGBoost, AWS, Sklearn

Introduction

Data Science is one key element in the future of Pricing in Motor Insurance and machine learning techniques are used to study how can be combined different and more granular models in technical pricing, extend analytics to analyze the customer behavior to have an end to end process to ensure adaptable prices.

Machine Learning is a subfield of Artificial Intelligence that enables machines to improve at a given task with experience. In our case, the input data is labeled and we will use supervised learning to train the model. In general, after the important information is highlighted in the data and the outliers are removed, feature engineering is performed in the preprocessing phase and this is a critical task that must be done before training. This is critical because most of the time, around 80%, is allocated to preprocessing and the remaining 20% includes training the model and performing hyperparameters optimization.

In this article we will present the steps that are used in general to preprocess the data before we use it in a machine learning model and the particularities of those for the XGBoost model, this is a Decision Tree Modeling- Boosting that needs less data preparation.

Methodology Description

Data processing has been talked about since 2013 [4] when it was used for cleaning and structuring data in the desired format, later the concept began to take shape even more when discussing Data Mining, [7] includes data preparation, compounded by integration cleaning, normalization, and transformation of data; and data reduction tasks; feature selection, instance selection, discretization, etc. The result expected after reliable chaining of data preprocessing tasks is a final dataset, which can be considered correct and useful for further data mining algorithms.

With the implementation of machine learning models, preprocessing techniques were applied to these models as well, concluding that some techniques can be applied specifically to a particular model. Working with a machine learning model, the data is formatted in the desired structure and mode so that it is the easier application of algorithms and obtaining results as close as possible to reality.

Currently [6] working to improve and use tools that provide the desired result in the shortest possible time, but all user data preprocessing techniques, this being done through specific tools, very intuitive and easy to use.

Data Preprocessing is that the opening move in constructing a machine learning model, supported we can establish the accuracy and representation. If the data has missing values, is incomplete, or doesn't have an acceptable format then this cannot be used directly within the implementation of the machine learning model. The goal is to get meaningful and trusted data after we finish the preprocessing step.

Why is Data preprocessing needed?

- some machine learning models must have a selected format for the input file, for achieving the best result
- the input dataset must be prepared and formatted in such a way multiple algorithms might be executed, the results will be comparable, and also the best model should be selected

XGBoost is incredibly popular for its speed and performance and is an implementation of Gradient Boosting. In XGBoost you'll be able to opt to boost a linear model or a tree. Usually, trees give better results. If you employ a tree, then you don't have to normalize your data. [5] Internally, XGBoost models represent all problems as a regression predictive modeling problem that only takes numerical values as input. the info is coming in several forms and it's important to prepare them in an expected format.

The next variety of preprocessing techniques is done to the input data:

Discovering the Data

Only qualitative data of numerical properties, such as mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum values, and so on, maybe obtained using the stated method.

Handling Missing Values

Missing data can have a giant impact on the model, so they may be treated with different methods:

- Eliminate rows with missing values - rows with unsatisfactory missing data should be removed.
- Eliminate the column - if the column has 95% or more missing values, it can and wishes to be deleted because the estimation of the missing values cannot be trusted
- Replace missing values - may be done by filling the values in with the mean,

- median or most frequent value of the respective feature
- Use machine learning techniques - this is more complex but can work well with numerical and categorical data, during this case Deep Learning, KNN or Regression techniques can be used

XGBoost model utilized in this case can automatically learn the way to best handle missing data. [5] XGBoost was designed to figure with sparse data and missing data is handled the identical way that sparse or zero values are handled, by minimizing the loss function.

Dealing with Outliers

In the case of regression, this is often a crucial topic, because for an optimal result a standard distribution is needed, but sometimes multicollinearity is a controversy because it casts doubt on an experimental variable's statistical significance. During a multivariate analysis equation, multicollinearity occurs when a variable quantity is substantially associated with one or more of the opposing independent variables. The simplest thanks to handling outliers are by performing data visualization, using two statistical methods: variance or percentiles.

Decision Tree Modeling - Boosting are with collinear variables, so during this case, we don't have to make other transformations.

Handling categorical data

The input data contains numerical and categorical data, but to feed the machine learning algorithms we need to use only numeric values, in this case, must be performed one-hot encoding to convert from categorical data into numerical. If there are N categories, there will be N-1 binary columns to represent them, with only one active. XGBoost may assume that encoded integer values for each input variable have an ordinal relationship.

Binning

Binning could be used for nonlinear transformation from both numerical and categorical transformations to categorical. Can be used to improve the model robustness and avoid overfitting, or if the data contains a lot of uncertainty.

To be able to use the XGBoost model, after the binning is done, one hot encoding must be applied, to transform the variable in numeric type.

Log Transform

Log transform reduces the negative effect of outliers since it normalizes the magnitude difference, can be applied to positive values only to avoid getting error.

Handling Dates and Times

The inconsistent format of dates can be a specific type of data inconsistency, in this case, to feed the machine learning algorithm with dates and times variable, those will be split into years, months, days, and so on variables.

Scaling

Feature Scaling is required before training Artificial Neural Networks to ensure that features are within the same scale, just because some features are big, they won't be used as the main predictor. ScikitLearn offers several tools to perform feature scaling:

- Normalization - involves transforming or converting your dataset into a normal distribution
- Standardization - transforms the data to have a mean of zero and a standard

deviation of 1 Standardization is preferred over normalization when there are a lot of outliers.

Shuffling

Shuffling is an important step before training machine learning models, used to avoid any bias or pattern related to the order of the data because the data is divided into training, testing, and validation. The quality and performance of the ML model will increase and the tendency to overfit the training data will decrease.

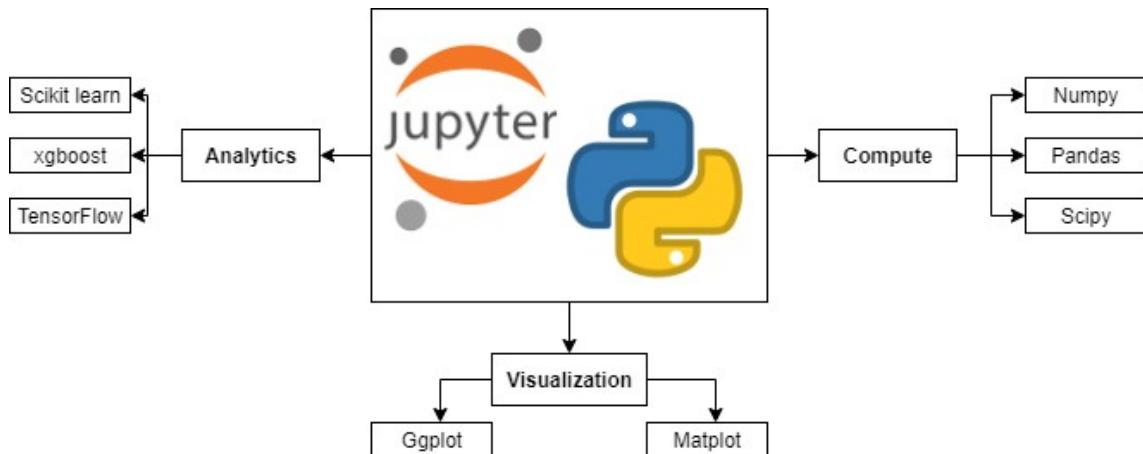


Figure 1: Python libraries

Feature Split

All machine learning algorithms must be thoroughly evaluated for correctness. In order to do that, the data set must be divided into two: a training set and a testing set. In general, the training data set is 80% of the initial statistics set, and the testing set to be 20% of the original data set. But this ratio can differ 70–30% or 75–25%. A 50–50% split is not wanted, because it can lead to model overfitting.

Results

Description of the dataset

Machine learning is a part of Artificial Intelligence that enables machines to improve tasks based on the experience we use supervised learning; the training algorithms are using labeled input/output data we use structured data.

This paper will use the data received from an insurance company from Romania. For the initial development of the model will be used a CSV data file from 2016 to 2019, and after that for accurate validation of the model, we will test with current data, based on our collaboration agreement.

Tools used for development

To preprocess big data will be used Python code, in a Jupiter Notebook; this is an open-source web application that allows code development and distribution, combined with equations and pictures in the same place. The main advantage of using this tool is the fact that the code and the results can be shared easily.

There are many libraries developed in Python, that offers several algorithms for clustering, regression, classification, that can be used to preprocess the data, like:

Implementation in Python

In the next part, will be presented the python commands used in Jupiter Notebook and the result generated.

Step 1. Importing the libraries

```
import pandas as pd
import numpy as np
import sys
import os
from sklearn.preprocessing import LabelEncoder
from sklearn.preprocessing import OneHotEncoder
from numpy.random import RandomState
from sklearn.model_selection import train_test_split
```

Based on [3] the next libraries are mostly used for preprocessing and their main characteristics are:

- Pandas — a package providing fast, flexible and expressive data structures designed to make working with “relational” or “labeled” data
- Scikit-learn — a library that provides many unsupervised and supervised learning algorithms and is built upon NumPy, pandas, and Matplotlib
- Statsmodel — a package that allows users to explore data, estimate statistical models and perform statistical tests
- Matplotlib — a plotting library
- Seaborn — a library for making statistical graphics in Python (towardsdatascience.com).

Step 2. Import dataset

```
df = pd.read_csv('D:\Python\data\input_data.csv')
```

Step 3. List data

This is a step in which the data is analyzed based on the description of the dataset, the variable's type is defined and if there are categorical or DateTime columns, those must be transformed.

```
df.head(5)
df.describe() # description of data
df.info()
```

Step 4. Check missing data

This step is not mandatory for preprocessing, it can be useful for the descriptive statistics defined to evaluate the dataset, but the XGBoost model can handle the missing data.

```
df.isnull().head()
```

Step 5. Handeling categorical data

- Version 1 - Encoding Data label

To be used in the XGBoost model, the categorical variable must be transformed in a numeric variable and this can be done using One Hot Encoding, in this case, the encoding data label must be defined, an instance must be created for this in which the category column must be passed and in the end, the new info must be merged with the data frame.

```

le = LabelEncoder()
df['Currency_type']= le.fit_transform(df['Currency'])
enc = OneHotEncoder(handle_unknown='ignore')
enc_df = pd.DataFrame(enc.fit_transform(df[['Currency_type']]).toarray())
df = df.join(enc_df)

```

- Version 2 - Use dummy

Another method to transform the categorical column is to generate binary values using the get dummies function, and after that, merge the result with the data frame.

```

currency_type = ('EUR', 'RON', 'USD')
currency_type = pd.DataFrame(currency_type, columns=['Currency'])
dum_df = pd.get_dummies(currency_type, columns=["Currency"],
prefix=["Currency_is"])
df = df.join(dum_df)

```

Step 6. Feature Split

```

rng = RandomState()
train = df.sample(frac=0.8, random_state=rng)
test = df.loc[~df.index.isin(train.index)]

```

RandomState is used to control the shuffling of the data. If the same value is used the process can be validated over multiple runs. The data is split into 80% for training and 20% for testing, with the assumption that the validation will be done with current data. After this step, we will have two datasets with the same characteristics.

Step 7. Prepare data for XGboost

```

import xgboost as xgb
dtrain = xgb.DMatrix(train)

```

XGboost in Python accepts multiple formats for the source and after that stores them in a Matrix object. In this case, initially, the data was imported from a CSV file, preprocess in a panda data frame and this was will be used in the next steps.

Conclusions

Data preprocessing is a data mining technique that involves transforming raw data into an understandable format. Real-world data is often incomplete, inconsistent, and/or lacking in certain behaviors or trends, and is likely to contain many errors. Data preprocessing is a proven method of resolving such issues. Data preprocessing prepare raw data for further processing.

In the end, after all these steps presented in this article will be followed, the source data used for an XGboost model must be in a format that allows better performance for the model. These steps are basics and can work through a large data set, cleaning and preparing the data for any type of project. Understanding the transformations needed, then is clearer what are the assumptions of the algorithm.

In general, in Python new libraries are developed, and those are very easy to use, intuitive and the result gets impressive results. We presented the general preprocessing techniques, but some of them are integrated into the XGboost model.

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FACTORII DETERMINANȚI ȘI PREDISPOZANȚI AI FENOMENULUI INFRACTIONAL, ÎN PRINCIPAL ÎN CAZUL INFRAȚIUNILOR CONTRA PROPRIETĂȚII

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Abstract: *Approaching a hypercomplex and large-scale field, solid theoretically consolidated, I carry out a research-intervention, of applicative, pragmatic invoice, "evidence based" type, through which will be associated theoretical-methodological models, of descriptive, explanatory and predictive, operative invoice. in criminal law, legal sociology, criminology and social assistance, which ensures a holistic approach to crimes against property. The analyzes start from the social coordinates of crimes against property, as a social fact and social phenomenon, which they frame in the paradigms of crime, revealing their legal connotations. The first step in addressing this issue is to correctly define all its components, to identify the causes, mechanisms and triggers, in an attempt to find an explanation for the dramatic increase in crime, crime rates against property in a very short time in many states of the world. In legal sociology, in order to explain the phenomenon of crime, it is necessary to first know the causes that determine its existence.*

The criminal phenomenon includes all behaviors and conducts with a high degree of social danger, because they violate legal norms, criminal, in fact, those imperative rules that defend fundamental rights, and the most important values of social unity.

The concept of cause describes that phenomenon which precedes and determines a certain phenomenon called effect. Starting from the idea that the same causes and in the same circumstances can produce the same effects but also that the relationship from cause to effect consists in the succession between cause and effect, as well as in its necessity, it can be concluded that a cause if known is very likely to anticipate and predict the effect.

Keywords: triggers, crime, social coordinates, causes, criminal phenomenon.

Introducere

Analizele pornesc de la coordonatele sociale ale infracțiunilor contra patrimoniului, ca fapt social și fenomen social, pe care le încadrează în paradigmele criminalității, relevându-le și conotațiile juridice:

- se explorează structura patrimoniului și problema apărării penale a elementelor ce constituie patrimoniul;
- în planul dezvoltării acestor conceptii, este întreprins un demers susținut în vederea definirii rolului și locului patrimoniului ca obiect juridic – generic, precum și a identificării cadrului infracțiunilor contra patrimoniului și obiectul acestora;
- dintr-o perspectivă exegetică, dar și prospectivă, este pusă în atenție, inclusiv problema proprietății intelectuale, ca obiect de ocrotire în contextul apărării juridice a patrimoniului și, implicit, noțiunea de patrimoniu - ca valoare socială și necesitatea apărării penale a acestuia (Abraham & Fîrțală, 2002).

Norma juridică, devianța socială și infracționalitatea

Norma juridică, definită ca regulă de conduită generală, impersonală și obligatorie, care exprimă voința electoratului înfațisat de organul legislativ, regulă de conduită al cărei scop este acela de a asigura ordinea socială ce poate fi dusă la îndeplinire pe cale statală, iar la nevoie, prin constrângere (Dogaru & Mihai, 2015)

Devianța este concepută ca fiind nonconformitatea în raport de normele sociale, respectiv ca „orice act, conduită sau manifestare care violează normele societății, ori ale unui grup social particular” (Chipea, 1997).

Fenomenul infracțional cuprinde totalitatea comportamentelor și conduitelor cu un grad ridicat de pericolozitate socială, deoarece acestea violează normele juridice, cu caracter penal, în fapt, acele norme imperative prin care sunt apărate drepturile fundamentale, și cele mai importante valori ale unității sociale (Balica, 2008).

Literatura de specialitate atestă influența unor factori sociali și individuali, privind infracționalitatea. Dintre aceștia, principaliii factori determinanți și predispozanți ai fenomenului infracțional, sunt:

- vârsta, ca prim factor care influențează comiterea crimei și tipul crimei săvârșite.
- criminalitatea s-ar situa într-o relație direct proporțională cu forța fizică a individului, arătând că în tinerețe se săvârșesc fapte cu violență, mai cu seamă contra persoanei, iar la bătrânețe, infracțiuni contra proprietății.
- sexul, influențează disponibilitatea de a comite infracțiuni, arătând că cel mai frecvent, bărbații comit infracțiuni, iar în privința tipului de infracțiuni arată că femeile preferă infracțiunile contra proprietății.
- anotimpul, exercită o influență în sensul că vara se comit mai multe infracțiuni contra persoanei, iar iarna mai multe contra proprietății
- climatul sudic favorizând săvârșirea infracțiunilor contra persoanei, iar cel nordic, infracțiunile contra proprietății,
- eterogenitatea socială, fiind determinată de imigrare, poate conduce la discriminare, violență, etc,
- profesia influențează la rândul ei tipurile de delicte comise funcție de pregătirea profesională,
- sărăcia, infracțiunile se comit ca o consecință a trecerii rapide de la o stare de confort la una de disconfort și mizerie.
- alcoolismul, determină acele infracțiuni care se comit cu violență (Banciu, 2005).

Principalele cauze care determină infracționalitatea, au fost amplu dezbatute și studiate de-a lungul timpului, fiind formulate mai multe teorii.

În literatura sociologică postdurkheimiană numeroase teorii sociologice descriu cauzele infracțiunilor: teoria dezorganizării sociale, unele teorii culturaliste, teoria asociațiilor diferențiale, teoria conflictelor de cultură, teoria subculturilor delincvente, teoria etichetării, teoria reacției sociale.

Cauzele devianței și ale fenomenului infracțional

În sociologia juridică, pentru a explica fenomenul infracționalității este necesar a cunoaște mai întâi cauzele care îi determină existența.

Fenomenul infracțional cuprinde totalitatea comportamentelor și conduitelor cu un grad ridicat de pericolozitate socială, deoarece acestea violează normele juridice, cu caracter penal, în fapt, acele norme imperative prin care sunt apărate drepturile fundamentale, și cele mai importante valori ale unității sociale (Chipea, 1997).

Conceptul de cauză descrie acel fenomen care precede și determină un anumit fenomen numit efect. Pornind de la idea că aceleasi cauze și în aceleasi împrejurări pot

produce aceleași efecte dar și că relația de la cauză la efect constă în succesiunea dintre cauză și efect, precum și în necesitatea acestuia, se poate concluziona că o cauză dacă este cunoscută este foarte probabil a se anticipa și prevedea și efectul.

Raportul de cauzalitate nu se rezumă doar la două fenomene ci, de cele mai multe ori, fenomenul cauză implică mai multe fenomene, legate între ele print-un lanț cauzal (Chipea, 1996). Cauza se deosebește de condiție, aceasta din urmă fiind un concept ce desemnează un fenomen care favorizează sau altfel spus ajută la producerea unui alt fenomen. Condițiile pot favoriza sau dimpotrivă pot înfrâna producerea efectului. Pentru analizarea raportului de cauzalitate, un alt concept este cel de factor.

Prin noțiunea de factor, într-o interpretare, dată în sens restrâns, se înțelege o cauză, având în această accepțiune o sferă identică. Printr-o altă interpretare, prin noțiunea de factor se înțelege mai mult decât o cauză, fiindu-i acordat un sens mai larg, noțiunea de factor înglobând atât o cauză cât și o condiție (Batâr, 2009).

Au fost formulate astfel câteva explicații plauzibile pentru a lămuri cauzele care au condus la săvârșirea infracțiunilor contra patrimoniului, cele mai multe, evidențiind faptul că:

- sunt provocate de creșterea sărăciei și / sau a inegalității veniturilor
- sunt provocate de sporirea bogăției
- apar ca produs al statului asistențial modern
- sunt rezultatul unei mari schimbări culturale, incluzând declinul religiei și influența căpătată de satisfacerea individualistă a nevoilor personale ale individului în fața obligațiilor comunitare (Bujdoiu, 2001).

În ceea ce privește infracționalitatea, în literatura de specialitate se face trimitere la mai multe astfel de tipuri de cauze, care pot fi clasificate astfel :

- **cauze generale**- care determină mai multe tipuri de crime, în strânsă legătură cu persoana infractorului și cu mediul.
- **cauze speciale**, care fac referire la un anumit domeniu sau la un anumit tip de infracțiune
- **cauze partiale**, care se referă doar la un tip de segment din totalul lanțului cauzal, care determină în general infracționalitatea
- **cauze obiective**, care privesc aspectele materiale cum ar fi sărăcia
- **cauze subiective**, care reflectă subiectivitatea infractorului, respectiv motivația acestuia, interesul individului, anumite atitudini, sentimente sau aspirații ale acestuia
- **cauze principale**, care au un rol mai important în producerea fenomenului infracțional
- **cauze secundare**, care au un aport mai redus
- **cauze determinante**, fiind acele cauze care au un rol esențial în săvârșirea unor acte criminale, cum ar fi dorința de răzbunare
- **cauze declanșatoare**, care provoacă și determină trecerea la actul criminal, având o motivație cum ar fi o ceartă sau orice alt motiv care contribuie la determinism.
- **cauze ereditare**, care aparțin eredității, cum ar fi debilitatea mintală
- **cauze de dezvoltare**, adică cele care aparțin condițiilor și mediului din care provine și în care se dezvoltă individul, cum ar fi anumite grupuri delinvente (Bonea, 2015).

În analizarea cauzalității fenomenului infracțional se impune a se defini conceptele de posibilitate, realitate și probabilitate. (Allen & Anderson, 2017). Posibilitatea reprezintă acea stare a unui fenomen, de ipostază viitoare în care acest fenomen ar putea trece, aceasta în măsura în care sunt îndeplinite unele condiții. Altfel spus, posibilitatea este acea stare de realitate în devenire, realitatea descriind starea actuală, ipostaza prezentă a unui anumit fenomen care apare ca înfăptuit. Așadar, pentru a califica un fenomen ca fiind posibil a se

înfăptui se prezumă a se analiza direcția de evoluție în viitor a realității, o transpunere în viitor, pornind de la extrapolarea unor tendințe desprinse în evoluția sa anterioară (Allen & Anderson, 2017).

Probabilitatea de a se produce un anumit fenomen infracțional constă în măsura în care posibilitatea se transformă în realitate și de a se analiza care ar fi șansele unor astfel de transformări, altfel spus, de a se analiza apropierea dintre posibilitatea actuală și realitatea viitoare.

Pentru studierea fenomenului infracțional, care este unul foarte complex și de anvergură, ce implică o determinare multiplă, s-a analizat problema raportului de cauzalitate, apreciindu-se că studierea fenomenului infracțional este foarte dificilă, având o diversitate de particularități. Dificultatea derivă tocmai din faptul că studierea implică reconstituirea acelei realități care a precedat actul infracțional în sine. La aceasta se adaugă bineînțeles și poziția cercetătorului, aceasta în raport cu legiuitorul care de altfel, se află în imposibilitatea abordării directe.

Scurte concluzii

Studiind ordinea socială și ordinea de drept, normele sociale și normele juridice, evoluția acestora în timp, abordările specialiștilor în materie și a unor sociologi renumiți, din vechime și până în prezent, se poate observa că impactul acestora și implicațiile majore pe care le au sunt diferite și nu apar la fel de pregnant în diferite perioade iar referințele fac trimitere, în principal, fie la ultimii ani, fie la perioadele mult mai vechi.

Creșterea ratei infracțiunilor, neîncrederea și individualismul sunt forme care însotesc starea de tranziție, de la epoca industrială, la cea postindustrială.

Dintr-o analiză profundă, privind fenomenul infracțional, prin prisma unor abordări sociologice ce pun în discuție fundamentele însăși ale organizării sociale, se poate observa că există unele dovezi ce indică apariția în Occident, a primelor semne reale de redresare socială.

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Section 2

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE SUSPENSION OF COURSES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON THE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION ACTIVITY IN SĂLAJ COUNTY

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Abstract: Research conducted on the topic of change has proven that resistance to change and adaptation to change are influenced by national cultural, organizational and individual characteristics.

In the last 30 years, it has been found that changes undertaken in education are superficial, applied sporadically, have failed to be generalized at the national level, and moreover, old practices are still favoured in contradiction with the renewal trends promoted by national education policies. As part of the Romanian educational system, preschool education faces the same problems.

A major difficulty that the health system in Romania had to confront was the management of the Coronavirus epidemic. Starting with March 2020 it has been bringing new challenges in the lives of professionals working in early education services, the biggest being the suspension of face-to-face courses and then the organization of classes online. In this context, the development of a documentation and data collection approach, based on an online questionnaire, aimed at identifying the main challenges, difficulties but also benefits brought on by these changes in the teaching-learning-assessment process has proven to be absolutely necessary. The collected data has allowed a better organization and development of online teaching activity at preschool level, in Sălaj County, until the end of the school year.

Keywords: preschool education, resistance/adaptation to change, improvement of teaching activity.

Introducere

Învățământul românesc, ca parte a societății, trebuie situat în contextul problematicii generale a societății în care funcționează. Ca urmare, sistemul de învățământ (și, implicit, cultura organizațională din instituțiile de învățământ) este influențat de tot ceea ce, din punct de vedere istoric, s-a întâmplat în societatea românească.

Cadrul teoretic

Valorizând tipul de cultură tradițională, după încercări repetate de efectuare a unor schimbări educaționale care s-au derulat pe parcursul a treizeci de ani, realitatea relevă faptul că acestea sunt, în general, superficiale, se aplică sporadic, nu au reușit să fie generalizate la nivel național și mai mult, se păstrează, în continuare practici vechi în contradicție cu tendințele de înnoire promovate prin politicile educaționale naționale. David D. (2015) afirmă în studiul său faptul că suntem, la nivel național, într-un proces complex de schimbare a tipului de cultură, a paradigmelor, iar milenarii (cetățenii cu vârstă situată sub 30 de ani) sunt cei care valorizează dominant tipul de cultură occidentală. Totuși, în opinia sa, procesul de schimbare a culturii naționale va mai dura 10 – 20 de ani.

Ca parte a sistemului de învățământ românesc, învățământul preșcolar se confruntă cu aceleași probleme și, deși au fost identificate de către organisme internaționale în colaborare cu instituții de prestigiu din țară, măsurile de ameliorare au fost luate sporadic, fără a reuși să le rezolve (https://www.unicef.org/situatia_invata_prescolar_Rom.pdf). Astfel, putem afirma faptul că succesul reformelor educaționale depinde, implicit, de una dintre cele mai importante variabile, care o constituie resursa umană direct implicată în procesele instructiv-educative, respectiv cadrele didactice. Preda V.-R. (2010) apreciază că în acest context, când schimbările sunt percepute ca fiind copleșitoare și cerințele de exercitare a profesiei de didactice ridicate, este necesar să ne aplecăm și asupra problematicii stresului profesional și a impactului pe care acesta îl are asupra sănătății cadrelor didactice.

Metodologie

În perioada 10-17 aprilie 2020 am elaborat și aplicat un chestionar realizat în Google Forms de pe Google Drive, disponibil la adresa <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1NsGcb9XORctHM4gPR2zB0Nd88C-AkMRfQ-TqyeKuahs/edit>. Chestionarul cuprinde 22 de întrebări și a fost aplicat unui număr de 33 de educatoare din județul Sălaj care îndeplineau una sau mai multe funcții profesionale: funcții didactice – profesor mentor, profesor metodist, responsabil de cerc pedagogic; și funcții manageriale – director de grădiniță.

Scopul aplicării chestionarului a fost acela de a identifica modul în care s-a desfășurat procesul de predare-învățare-evaluare la nivel preșcolar în județul Sălaj în perioada 11 martie - 4 aprilie 2020, perioadă în care cursurile au fost suspendate, în vederea ameliorării activității online cu copiii - vezi articolul 2 din Hotărârea Nr. 6 din 09.03.2020 privind aprobarea unor măsuri suplimentare de combatere a noului Coronavirus, emisă de Guvernul României prin Comitetul Național pentru Situații Speciale de Urgență, măsură prelungită ulterior până la finalul anului școlar. (<http://www.cnscbt.ro/index.php/lex/1514-hot-6-cnssu/file>) Chestionarul a fost elaborat pornind de la demersurile investigative întreprinse de Asociația Step by Step în perioada suspendării cursurilor.

Structura întrebărilor a fost variată (întrebări deschise, precodificate multiplu sau utilizând scala Likert) și au vizat diferite aspecte ale problemei investigate:

- patru dintre întrebări au avut scopul de a colecta date referitoare la subiecți (vârstă, funcția deținută în organizație și mediul în care își desfășoară activitatea, numărul copiilor din grupă/grădiniță);

- o întrebare a vizat nivelul autoperceput al competențelor de TIC deținute de educatoarele chestionate;

- trei întrebări s-au referit la situația socio-economică a familiilor din care provin copiii din grupă/ grădiniță și nivelul competențelor TIC deținute de către părinții copiilor, așa cum sunt ele cunoscute de către educatoare/directoarele chestionate;

- opt întrebări au investigat modalitățile prin care au fost organizate activitățile online, aplicațiile/ platformele folosite, resursele digitale utilizate pentru organizarea învățării

copiilor la distanță, gradul de participare al copiilor și al părintilor acestora la activitățile propuse;

- patru întrebări au urmărit identificarea beneficiilor și provocărilor percepute de educatoare în ceea ce privește activitatea lor didactică, asupra procesului de predare-învățare-evaluare;

- două întrebări au urmărit obținerea de date privind nevoile profesionale ale cadrelor didactice pentru a realiza o activitate didactică eficientă cu copiii în context de distanțare socială (nevoi de formare, nevoi de contribuire la realizarea unei comunități de învățare).

Din datele colectate, se constată că persoanele care exercită rol de mentori în învățământul preșcolar sălăjean își desfășoară activitatea, în principal, în mediul urban (90,1%), mare parte dintre acestea sunt și directoare de grădină (45,5%), majoritatea sunt în perioada de deplină maturitate profesională (66,7% au vârsta cuprinsă între 41 și 50 de ani, iar 24,2% au vârsta cuprinsă între 35 și 40 de ani) și afirmă că nivelul competențelor digitale pe care îl dețin este mediu (69,7%) și ridicat (30,3%). Numărul copiilor din grupele unde își desfășoară activitatea este peste 20 în majoritatea covârșitoare a grupelor, există și grupe cu 36 copii, mult peste nivelul maxim specificat în Legea Nr. 1/2011 (<https://www.ilegis.ro/oficiale/index/act/222141/data/2020-01-28/dataI/2020-01-28>).

S-a considerat util să se investigheze situația socio-economică a familiilor copiilor și s-a constatat că 89,9% dintre educatoare apreciază că au o situație materială bună, 9,1% foarte bună și doar 3% dintre educatoare consideră că starea socio-economică a familiilor copiilor din grupa lor este scăzută. Aceste date sunt puternic influențate de faptul că grupele din grădinițele din mediul urban sunt predominant de program prelungit, ceea ce presupune că cel puțin unul dintre părinți are un loc de muncă și poate susține finanțar plata hranei copiilor (Figura nr.1).



Întrucât învățarea online la nivel preșcolar presupune pe lângă deținerea de către familii a unor dispozitive cu conexiune la internet și competențe ale părintilor în zona TIC, s-a considerat util să se investigheze și aceste aspecte. Din răspunsurile primite, 72,7% dintre educatoare sunt de părere că părinții dețin un nivel mediu de competență în domeniul TIC, ponderea celor cu nivel ridicat de expertiză este de 12,1%, iar scăzut 15,2%. (Figura nr.2)

Se constată că doar 39,9% dintre educatoare cunosc faptul că familiile copiilor dețin computere suficient de dezvoltate pentru a accesa informații variate de pe internet, 18,2% afirmă că familiile nu dețin computere suficient de performante pentru a accesa informații variate de pe internet, iar aproape jumătate (42,4%) nu au astfel de informații. (Figura nr.3)

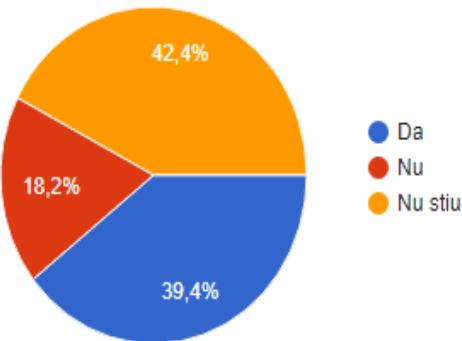


Figura nr.3 *Familiile copiilor detin computer suficient de performante pentru a accesa informații variate de pe internet*

Din datele colectate, se constată că, în primele săptămâni de suspendare a cursurilor, lipsa reglementărilor referitoare la desfășurarea învățării online a determinat ca fiecare **conducere a grădinițelor** să caute soluții de a completa lipsa informațiilor prin diverse măsuri: „educatoarele au venit prin rotație la serviciu, au completat chestionare prin care au solicitat să lucreze la domiciliu în perioada de suspendare a cursurilor”, „S-a menținut pe toată perioada legătura cu părinții și copiii prin sugerarea unor teme pe grupul închis de părinți, pe pagina de facebook a grupelor. Comunicarea a fost reciprocă, părinții cooperând foarte bine cu educatoarele”, „În perioada 11-13 martie, personalul nedidactic a efectuat dezinfecția spațiilor, a mobilierului și a jucăriilor. Personalul didactic auxiliar a efectuat activități specifice care nu suportau amânare (plăti către furnizori, salarii). Pentru a veni în sprijinul cadrelor didactice, am transmis toate comunicările primite din partea Inspectoratului Școlar Județean Sălaj cu privire la sugestiile de activități/platforme educaționale care sunt accesibile preșcolarilor și la îndemâna părinților pentru a suplini lipsa cursurilor și a le oferi alternative de activități pe care le pot desfășura acasă cu copiii. Prin intermediul aplicației WhatsApp, cadrele didactice au păstrat legătura cu părinții, i-au consiliat cu privire la activitățile pe care le-ar putea desfășura în casă, cu copiii, le-au recomandat activități și site-uri care să-i sprijine în acest sens.”, „Menționez că prioritatea a constituit-o respectarea strictă a directivelor oficiale primite, asigurarea securității și protejarea sănătății angajaților, copiilor și a părinților grădiniței.”, „asigurarea funcționării unității cu un număr minim de personal; întâlniri online cu cadrele didactice, dar și cu tot personalul unității; sugestii de activități și modalități de petrecere a timpului pentru părinți și implicit pentru copii.” etc. În cea ce privește **cadrele didactice**, acestea s-au limitat la a trimite părinților, pe grupurile de WhatsApp și Facebook create, link-uri și sugestii de activități pe care le pot desfășura cu preșcolarii, acasă: „am distribuit materiale, fișe de lucru, povești etc. pentru copii, activități/fișe/cântece/poezii/povești”, „Am vorbit cu fiecare părinte, la telefon sau prin mesaje, despre ce și cum ar putea să facă cu copilul pentru ca acest timp petrecut în familie să fie un timp de calitate, atât pentru copil, cât și pentru ceilalți membri ai familiei. Am lăsat la latitudinea lor să selecteze ce și când este oportun să facă.”, „M-am concentrat pe consolidarea cunoștințelor predate până în prezent”, „Am înființat un grup închis pe Facebook pentru familiile copiilor, unde am încărcat diferite activități conform planificării. Am ținut legătura pe platforma Zoom.”, „fiindcă nu știu dacă părinții dețin aparatul necesară (cameră, microfon, monitoare mari), nu am organizat în niciun fel. M-am gândit la aplicația zoom, dar nici eu nu am aparatul necesar să fac activități online cu copiii și să am și libertate de mișcare. Nu cred că ar fi oportun să vorbesc într-un telefon și copiii să mă urmărească tot pe telefon. Nu ar crea o obișnuință?”, „Selectarea/imprimarea și distribuirea unor fișe de lucru adunate sub titlul *Cărticica mea cu activități de stat acasă*, cărticică distribuită cu ajutorul părinților din comitetul de părinți” etc.

Cele mai folosite aplicații de către educatoare/directoare în comunicare au fost grupurile închise de pe WhatsApp (51,51%) și Facebook (42,42%), iar cel mai puțin utilizate au fost aplicațiile pentru apeluri video (Zoom, Meet, Skype, Webex) ceea ce subliniază faptul

că nu s-au desfășurat activități în care educatoarea și copiii să comunice în timp real, prin apeluri video, ci doar s-au trimis informații și sugestii de activități pe care părinții să le desfășoare cu copiii. (Figura nr.4)

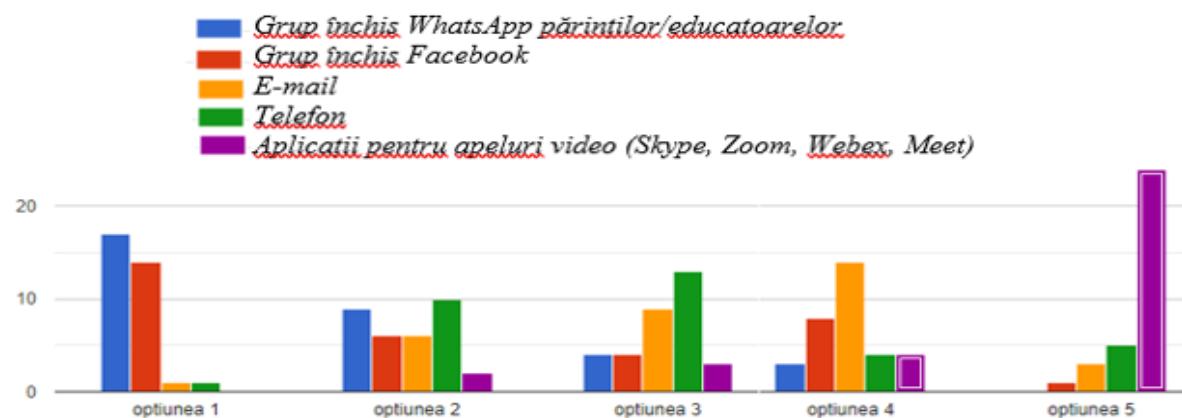
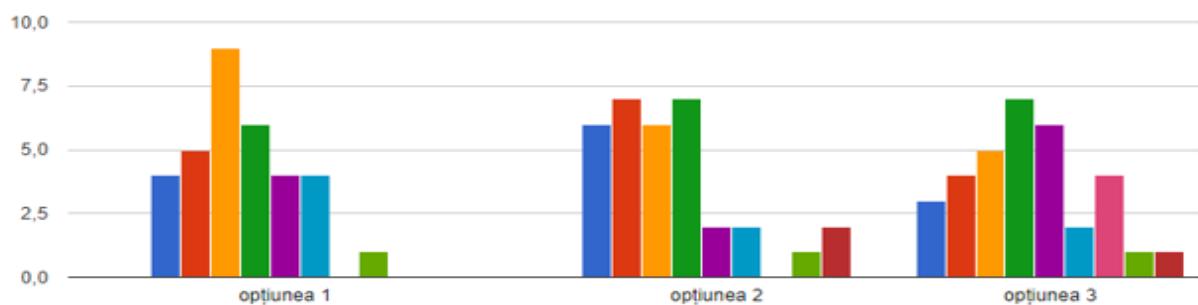


Figura nr.4 *Aplicatiile folosite pentru comunicarea cu părinții/educatoarele în perioada investigată (Optiunea 1-,,cea mai folosită”, Optiunea 5-,,cea mai puțin folosită”)*

Așa cum se poate observa mai jos (Figura nr.5), cele mai mari dificultăți cu care s-au confruntat în perioada în care activitățile se derulează la distanță au legătură cu lipsa instrumentelor și a competențelor de a produce resurse digitale (27,27%), lipsa instrumentelor pentru predarea sincron - software pentru transmisie live, platforme de predare (18,18%), respectiv dificultăți de ordin tehnic, platforme care trebuie instalate sau care nu funcționează (15,15%). Dificultățile de ordin socio-economic și cele privind infrastructura avută la dispoziție au fost cel mai puțin invocate.

- Dificultăți care privesc infrastructura avută la dispoziție (device performant, conectare la internet)
- Dificultăți de ordin tehnic (platforme care trebuie instalate, platforme care nu funcționează)
- Lipsa instrumentelor și a competențelor pentru producerea de resurse digitale (creare de continuturi)
- Lipsa instrumentelor pentru predarea sincron (software pentru transmisie live, platforme de predare)
- Dificultăți care decurg din lipsa de interes sau lipsa mijloacelor necesare de comunicare a părinților
- Lipsa continuturilor digitale adecvate vîrstei prescolare
- Dificultăți care privesc lipsa timpului pentru a identifica/adapta continuturi necesare
- Lipsa de interes pentru participarea la activitățile de învățare propuse
- Dificultăți de ordin socio-economic



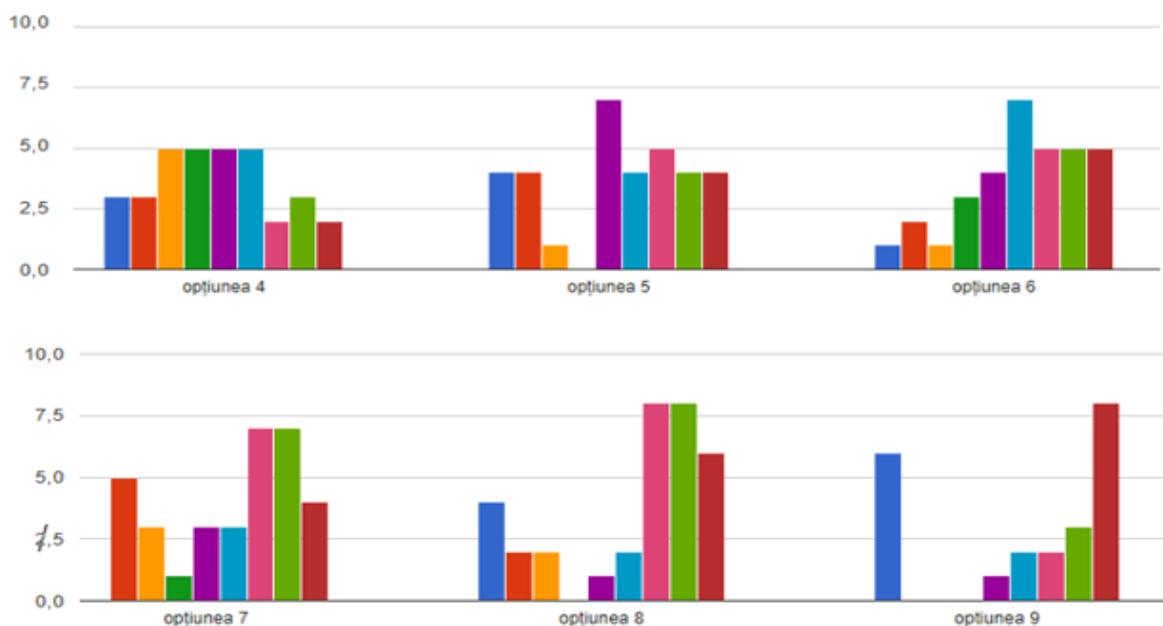
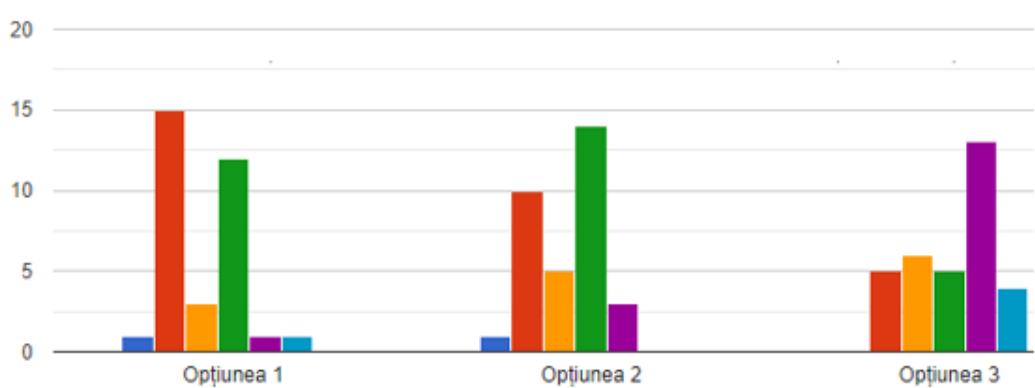


Figura nr.5 *Dificultătile cu care s-au confruntat în perioada de suspendare a cursurilor din cauza pandemiei de Covid 19 în care activitățile se derulează la distanță. (Optiunea 1- „cea mai comună dificultate”, Optiunea 9- „cea mai puțin comună dificultate”)*

Se constata ca educatoare/mentorii apreciaza ca cele mai utilizate modalități de organizare a activității de învățare online sau la distanță pentru copii în perioada pentru care s-au realizat demersurile investigative au fost transmiterea unor fișe de lucru, sugestii de activități, link-uri (45,45%) și sugestii de activități care pot fi realizate acasă, cu membrii familiei (36,36%), în timp ce organizarea lecțiilor online a fost cel mai puțin folosită (42,42%), alături de alte modalități, fără a fi specificate (54,54%). (Figura nr.6)

- Organizare de lectii online (folosind diferite platforme)
- Organizarea invatarii la distanta (transmitere fise de lucru, sugestii de activități, link-uri)
- Transmiterea informatiilor despre cum să se protejeze de Coronavirus
- Oferirea de sugestii de activități care se pot desfăsura acasă, împreună cu un membru al familiei
- Discutii cu parintii despre preocupările preferate ale copiilor sau despre teme de interes ale acestora în raport cu dezvoltarea copilului
- Personalizarea resurselor în functie de evolutia copilului și de feedback-ul primit de la parinti
- Altele



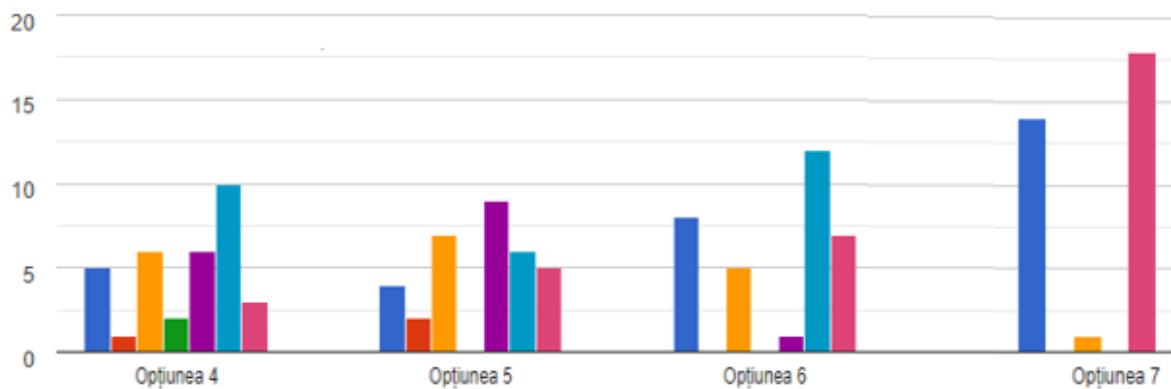


Figura nr.6 Cele mai utilizate modalități de organizare a activității de învățare pentru copii (online sau la distanță). (Optiunea 1-,,cea mai folosită”, Optiunea 7- „cea mai puțin folosită”)

Cele mai folosite au fost resursele educaționale gratuite existente în mediul online (54,54%) și cele create de educatoare (42,42%), iar cel mai puțin utilizate au fost resursele create la nivelul grădiniței (39,39%), respectiv cele create la nivel de județ (51,51%). Aceste date ne arată faptul că nici organizația, nici inspectoratul școlar nu au fost pregătiți pentru a oferi educatoarelor ca sprijin resurse educaționale utile desfășurării activității online. (Figura nr.7)

- Resurse create de fiecare educatoare/echipă de educatoare
- Resurse create pe nivele de vîrstă de către un grup de colegi care lucrează la grupa mică/mijlocie/mare
- Resurse create la nivelul grădiniței
- Resurse create la nivelul județului
- Resurse gratuite online
- Site-uri ale diferitelor organizatii

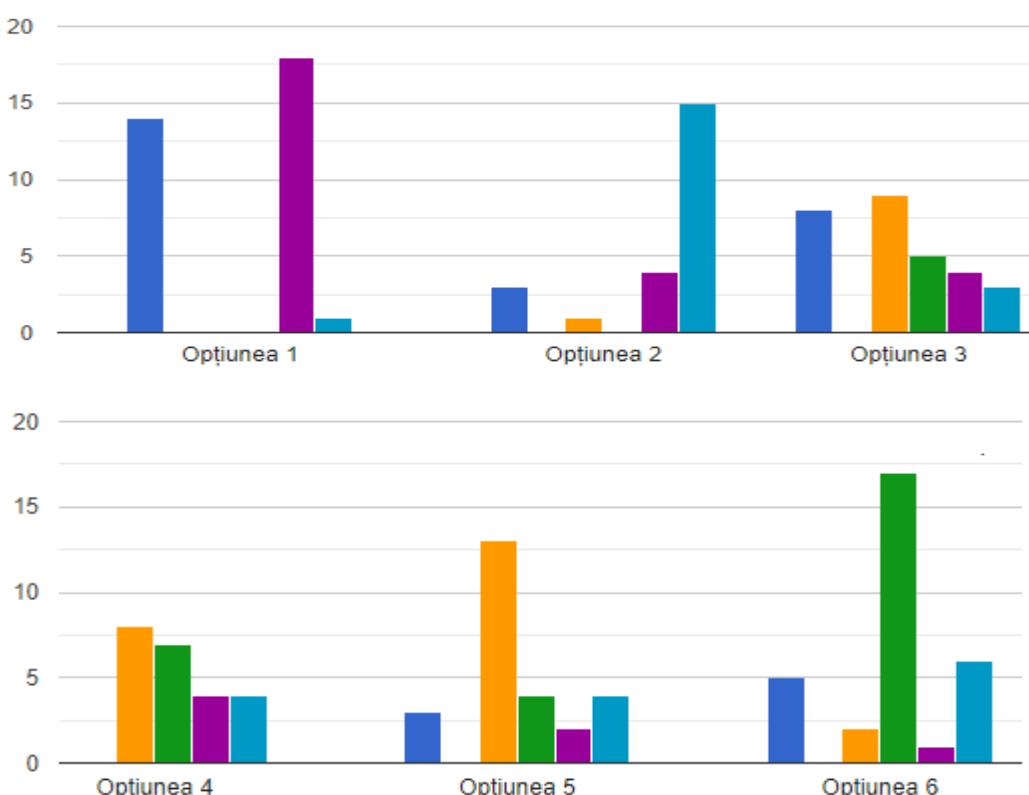


Figura nr.7 Resursele digitale folosite pentru a organiza învățarea pentru copiii din grupă (Optiunea 1-,,cea mai folosită”, Optiunea 6- „cea mai puțin folosită”)

Cel mai frecvent domeniu de dezvoltare vizat în activitățile propuse a fost menționat Domeniul Limbă și Comunicare (30,30%), iar în același procent (30,30%) au fost considerate foarte puțin stimulate capacitatele și atitudinile de învățare, respectiv dezvoltarea cognitivă și de cunoaștere a lumii.

Procentul participării tutorilor legali la activitățile online a variat, în toate grupele au fost copii care nu au participat deloc la activitățile online: 15,2% dintre educatoare apreciază că au participat sub 25% dintre copii; 36,4% dintre educatoare consideră că au participat la activități între 25 și 49% dintre copii; 33,3% dintre educatoare menționează o participare a copiilor între 50 și 74%, iar 15,2% dintre educatoare consideră că participarea copiilor a fost între 75 și 99%. Aceste date arată că nu numai în mediul rural sau în medii dezavantajate se înregistrează copii care nu beneficiază de influențele educative organizate de instituțiile școlare, dar și în mediul urban avem între 1 și peste 75% dintre copii cărora nu li s-a asigurat dreptul la educație în perioada pentru care s-au colectat datele. (Figura nr. 8)

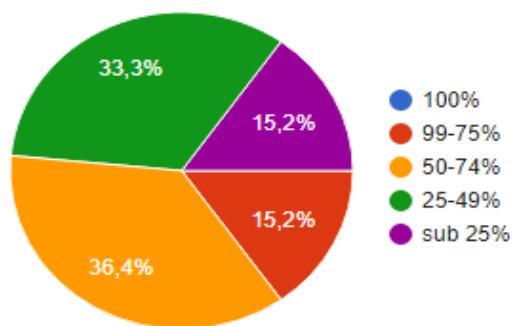


Figura nr.8 *Ponderea familiilor copiilor din grupa/grădinița care au participat la activități de învățare online*

Cele mai frecvente beneficii ale activităților online pentru copii, menționate de către educatoarele-mentorii, au fost: timpul de calitate alături de familie, conștientizarea de către părinți a complexității activităților desfășurate în și de grădiniță, programul flexibil, exersarea unor activități de igienă personală, cunoașterea directă a activității fiecărui membru din familie, implicarea copilului în construirea de relații sănătoase cu părinții și în exersarea abilităților de a utiliza mijloacele online de comunicare de către copii și părinți cu personalul din mediul grădiniței, familiarizarea cu o altfel de învățare (cea online), dar au existat și opinii că nu sunt beneficii („Ce beneficii să fie? Este un stres atât pentru mine cât și pentru copii – aşteptăm cu nerăbdare să revenim la grădiniță. Copiilor le este dor de grădiniță și mie de copii.”)

Pentru părinți, beneficiile menționate au legătură cu: „o mai bună cunoaștere a aptitudinilor copiilor, conștientizarea importanței actului educațional din grădiniță, mai mult timp de calitate petrecut alături de copiii lor”, „au mai mult timp să-și cunoască copiii, să-i vadă cum cresc, să se bucure de clipele unice pe care copilul le oferă”, „implicarea în realizarea de activități inedite”, „Îmbunătățirea relației părinte-copil, punerea în practică a unor activități de educație parentală, protejarea sănătății membrilor familiei”, „Cu siguranță, mulți dintre părinți au descoperit pasiuni și preferințe ale celor mici, pe care nu le cunoșteau. Părinții și-au dedicat cea mai mare parte a timpului copiilor, devenind, la rândul lor, copii. Părinții au valorificat informațiile și sugestiile de activități, în interesul copiilor.”, dar au existat și opinii că nu sunt astfel de beneficii („Niciun beneficiu, doar ca au fost nevoiți să stea izolați o perioadă atât de lungă. Au încercat să își umple timpul cu ce pot.”).

Pentru cadrele didactice, beneficiile au fost percepute în raport cu experimentarea unor noi modalități de predare, cu timpul utilizat pentru participarea la cursuri online și cu familia, studiu individual, căutare și concepere de resurse educaționale pentru activitatea cu

copiii, schimburi de experiență cu alte colegi, reevaluarea valorilor personale, dezvoltarea competenței digitale, program de lucru flexibil, dar și disconfort psihic datorat întreuperei brusește a activității cu copiii („Nici unul. Am confecționat materiale didactice pentru activitățile cu grupa, am listat fișe pentru copii cu imprimanta personală și le-am distribuit copiilor.”).

În acord cu dificultățile semnalate, educatoarele participante la studiu aduc în atenție nevoia de participare la cursuri de IT pentru a putea utiliza diferite platforme de învățare, nevoia de acces la resurse educaționale adecvate nivelului de vîrstă preșcolară, precum și aceea de a se crea platforme de comunicare cu profesioniști din domeniul educației timpurii, cu părinții și copiii.

Cele mai utile activități pentru susținerea cadrelor didactice în această perioadă și/sau ulterior, pentru a face față învățării la distanță sunt schimburile de experiență (30,3%), distribuire, schimburi de bune practici (21,1%), creare de resurse profesionale (18,2%) și traininguri online (12,1%). (Figura nr.9)

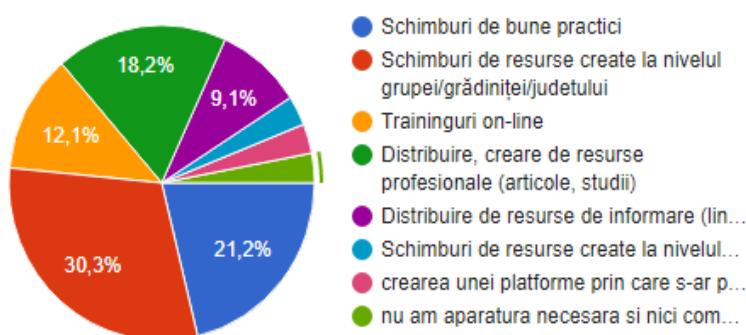


Figura nr.9 *Tipuri de activități utile pentru susținerea cadrele didactice pentru a face față învățării la distanță*

Există o disponibilitate ca educatoare/mentorii participanți la studiu de a se implica în construirea unei comunități de învățare la nivel preșcolar („Crearea unor grupuri de lucru la nivel de unitate și județ, pentru conceperea unor resurse educaționale, utilizabile în mediul online.”, „Concepere de planificări săptămânale, proiecte didactice”, „realizarea împreună cu alte colegi a unei platforme pentru întâlniri în comunități virtuale, atât pentru cadrele didactice, în vederea unor schimburi de bune practici, cât și pentru părinți și copiii preșcolari; elaborarea unor resurse educaționale deschise care să răspundă nevoilor actuale și încărcarea acestora pe platformă; realizarea unor seturi de jocuri, pe grupe de vîrste, pentru copii și părinți.” etc., dar și colegi care consideră că activitatea online nu este benefică pentru copii („Eu doresc să revenim la grădiniță și atât. Lăsați activitățile online pentru școlari. Copiii mici au nevoie de comunicare față în față, de îmbrățișarea educatoarei, de jocuri desfășurate cu ceilalți copii. Să nu exagerăm cu calculatorul – copiii trebuie să își protejeze vederea, la fel și educatoarea. Până la urmă le creăm o dependență față de calculator. Unde lăsăm grijă pentru sănătatea copiilor?”)

Concluzii

În perioada de suspendare a cursurilor s-a constat o lipsă a informațiilor privind modul de desfășurare a activității online cu copiii de vîrstă preșcolară. Studiul nostru relevă necesitatea de a abilita educatoarele pentru a desfășura activități online cu copiii, prin desfășurarea de cursuri gratuite, împărtășirea și diseminarea de exemple de bună practică, crearea R.E.D.-urilor adaptate predării-învățării-evaluării online și puse în domeniul public, pe site-uri oficiale (M.E.C., I.S.J.-uri, unități de învățământ);

La nivel declarativ, perceptia educatoarelor participante la studiu asupra propriilor competențe și demersuri de realizare a învățării online este pozitivă, ele consideră că au

abilități medii și ridicate în utilizarea internetului pentru desfășurarea activității cu preșcolarii. Pe de altă parte, din răspunsurile oferite la alte întrebări din chestionar reiese că utilizează o gamă restrânsă de aplicații, grupurile constituite cu părinții sunt, în general, pe WhatsApp sau Facebook, unde gradul de securizare este redus, dețin abilități limitate de organizare și desfășurare a activității online cu preșcolarii, cunosc puține aplicații utile pentru comunicarea online, au accesat în mică măsură platformele consacrate, s-au adaptat cu dificultate la schimbările aduse de suspendarea cursurilor, toate au desfășurat activitate didactică în perioada investigată (11 martie-4 aprilie 2020) ea limitându-se la redirecționarea de link-uri, fișe de lucru și sugestii de activități practic-gospodărești pe care părinții să le efectueze cu copiii acasă și recunosc că au nevoie să participe la cursuri care să le abilitizeze în domeniul TIC.

Schimbarea practicilor educaționale începute în contextul pandemiei cu Covid-19 va avea succes numai dacă va avea în vedere aspectele culturale din sistemul școlar, deoarece cultura organizațională reprezintă rezultatul ultim la care se ajunge prin succes repetat și prin procesul gradual de considerare a anumitor lucruri ca adevăr lipsit de orice îndoială (Chirică S., 1996). Astfel, dacă valorile și celelalte elemente culturale care se doresc a fi promovate vor intra în conflict cu cele existente, schimbarea va fi mimată și nu va fi realizată efectiv, iar educația furnizată copiilor nu va fi la standardele de calitate necesare unei bune dezvoltări a acestora.

Din răspunsurile educatoarelor nu reiese că preșcolarii, asistați de părinți, au fost prezenți în sincron la activități. De asemenea, au existat copii care, pe parcursul perioadei investigate, nu au beneficiat de nicio activitate educațională furnizată de instituția de învățământ, ceea ce ne permite să afirmăm că dreptul la educație nu a fost asigurat tuturor copiilor. Situații în care copii înscriși în grădiniță nu au participat deloc la activitățile online se regăsesc nu doar în mediul rural, cum se discută frecvent în spațiul public, ci și în mediul urban.

Un procent mare de educatoare participante la studiu nu au informații referitoare la mediul familial în care trăiesc copiii, ceea ce sugerează o comunicare redusă între școală și familie, cu implicații asupra cunoașterii și înțelegerii particularităților psihindividuale și comportamentale ale preșcolarilor în vederea adaptării demersului didactic la nevoile lor și trecerea de la ceea ce se numește „educația pentru toți” la realizarea unei „educații pentru fiecare”.

Resursele educaționale existente la data suspendării cursurilor nu au fost utile educatoarelor/mentorilor pentru a continua activitatea cu copiii în mediul online. Ele s-au bazat pe creativitatea și abilitățile dobândite anterior pentru a accesa resurse gratuite sau pentru a crea astfel de resurse, exigențele de calitate nefiind de fiecare dată satisfăcute.

În vederea ameliorării activității didactice online la nivel preșcolar, în județul Sălaj, este util a se avea în vedere:

- Alocarea de resurse financiare consistente pentru pregătirea inițială și formarea continuă a resursei umane din sistemul de învățământ, adaptarea programelor școlare și a auxiliarelor didactice la noile forme de predare-învățare-evaluare și sprijinirea familiilor copiilor/elevilor cu tablete/calculatoare și conexiune la internet pentru a diminua/elimina riscul abandonului școlar;
- Stabilirea unor atribuții specifice și, după caz, a unor indicatori de rezultat, referitor la desfășurarea unor activități de învățare cu copiii de 3-6 ani, cu implicarea părinților, pentru cadrele didactice;
- Adoptarea unui mod de anticipare a activităților promovate online (planificare) care să vizeze tematica abordată săptămânal/zilnic, în funcție de nevoile individuale și de grup ale copiilor, și selectarea unor teme de consiliere a părinților, ținându-se cont de problemele de educație a copiilor cu care se confruntă aceștia;

- Promovarea unor noi modalități de comunicare, inedite și operative de tipul videoconferințelor (prin Google Meet, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp etc.) și generalizarea acestor practici în teritoriu;
- Colaborarea cu instituții și specialiști în educația timpurie pentru dezvoltarea de resurse educaționale deschise, platforme de învățare online, aplicații digitale, emisiuni TV și radio și alte resurse care pot facilita și asigura suport pentru activitățile cu copiii de 3-6 ani la domiciliu, pe durata suspendării cursurilor;
- Monitorizarea organizării și desfășurării activităților suport pentru învățarea online la nivelul unităților de învățământ din județ;
- Oferirea de îndrumare de specialitate cadrelor didactice în proiectarea activităților de învățare online și în elaborarea de resurse educaționale deschise;
- Colectarea și analiza feedback-ului de la părinți, cadre didactice și alte categorii de personal implicați în organizarea și desfășurarea activităților suport de învățare online;
- Colaborarea școală-familie să aibă în vedere și aspecte privind mediul socio-economic în care copiii trăiesc, pentru a avea o imagine obiectivă asupra factorilor care influențează dezvoltarea copilului și identificarea măsurilor necesare pentru diminuarea/eliminarea riscului de părăsire timpurie a școlii.

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INCLUSIVE KINDERGARTEN, A KINDERGARTEN FOR ALL CHILDREN

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Abstract: The scope of this study is to identify the difficulties experienced by teachers in the inclusion process of children with special educational needs in the structures of mass preschool education, their need for training in the field of inclusive education, as well as shaping work strategies which contribute to the success of this process.

For conducting this study, 42 teachers from kindergartens in Cluj county, who encounter difficulties in the inclusion process of children with special educational needs within the kindergarten class they work at, were selected. The teachers are aged 20 to 50 years old and have a teaching experience of 1 to 30 years and are specialized as educators, teachers and teachers for preschool education.

In accordance with the proposed objectives and the hypotheses formulated I have applied an opinion questionnaire with items which ask for answers using the Likert scale (1-10), dichotomous answers and open answers, offering teachers great possibilities to express themselves, giving high internal consistency to this questionnaire.

Key words: children, special educational needs, integration, inclusion, teachers, kindergarten.

Introducere

Orice copil, indiferent de tipul de dezvoltare, poate întâmpina la un moment dat dificultăți de învățare, adaptare, relaționare socială. Acest lucru nu trebuie să ducă la excluderea lui socială și școlară, ba din contră, trebuie să se stabilească și analizeze cauzele care au dus la această situație și împreună cu familia și specialiștii să găsească soluții optime pentru copil.

Integrarea este un proces de includere în grădinițele de masă, la activitățile educative formale și non-formale, a acestor copii. Grădinița, este considerată ca fiind a doua instanță de socializare a copilului, iar integrarea acestuia reprezintă o particularizare a procesului de integrare socială a acestei categorii de copii, proces care are o importanță fundamentală în facilitarea integrării ulterioare în școală și viața comunitară prin formarea unor conduite și atitudini, a unor aptitudini și capacitați favorabile acestui proces.

Educația inclusivă se referă la integrarea copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale în grădinița de masă, mediu care poate oferi un climat favorabil dezvoltării armonioase a acestor copii și o echilibrare a personalității acestora.

Integrarea copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale, asigurarea de șanse egale la educație pentru aceștia și accesul lor în grădinițele de masă, reprezintă o prioritate pentru specialiștii din domeniul educației. În ultimii ani, au apărut multe articole, lucrări științifice și cercetări bazate pe educarea și integrarea în grădiniță a copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale. Este necesar însă ca, la nivelul sistemului de învățământ românesc, să fie concepute, și implementate în mod corect strategii și modalități de intervenție care să ajute la integrarea acestor copii cu cerințe educative speciale.

Fundamentare teoretică

Alois Gherghut spune că: „copiii cu nevoi educaționale speciale trebuie să facă parte din comunitate, să fie integrați și sprijiniți în adaptarea lor la mediul școlar. Ei au nevoie să fie puși în valoare, să beneficieze de practici educaționale individualizate, concepute într-o manieră în care să scoată în evidență înclinațiile, aptitudinile și capacitatele de învățare și de adaptare” (Neamțu, Gherghuț, 2000).

Educația incluzivă presupune:

- Valorizarea în egală măsură a tuturor copiilor;
- Acordarea dreptului la educație în grădiniță de masă, tuturor copiilor comunității;
- Adaptarea politicilor educaționale ale grădiniței și accesibilizarea serviciilor pentru toți copiii comunității;
- Acceptarea diferențelor dintre copii și folosirea acestei diversități ca resursă de învățare;
- Creșterea numărului copiilor integrați și reducerea numărului celor care sunt excluși din cultura, curriculum-ul și valorile promovate prin grădiniță;
- Eliminarea barierelor în învățare pentru toți copiii grupelor;
- Conștientizarea faptului că incluziunea în grădiniță și mai apoi în școală de masă, reprezintă puntea spre integrarea în societate (Gherghuț & Frumos, 2019).

În ceea ce privește modul de implicare al instituției de învățământ, fiecare membru din conducerea acesteia trebuie să îndeplinească anumite cerințe desprinse din principiile-cadru care stau la baza instituțiilor incluzive :

- să credă în valoarea învățământului integrat și să pună pe primul plan interesele copiilor din grădiniță;
- să respecte deontologia profesională și să demonstreze calități deosebite în relațiile cu copiii și cu personalul grădiniței ;
- să vegheze la calitatea educației și a condițiilor în care se desfășoară procesul didactic ;
- să mențină contactul permanent cu părinții /tutorii copiilor pe întreg parcursul activităților școlare desfășurate de aceștia în grădiniță;
- să fie receptiv la noile schimbări din societate și să mențină o strânsă legătură cu reprezentanții comunității locale ;
- să vegheze la calitatea morală și profesională a cadrelor didactice și a specialiștilor din instituție;
- să fie un model de acțiune pentru personalul grădiniței, părinți, dar și pentru copii, care trebuie să vadă în persoana sa un partener apropiat și apt să le înțeleagă nevoile și trăirile ;
- să încurajeze profesorii și specialiștii din școală în activitatea lor de zi cu zi, să-i ajute și să-i sprijine în momentele lor dificile sau când apar probleme de relaționare cu copiii cu cerințe educative speciale integrați în grădiniță ;
 - să se implice în activitățile de perfecționare a cadrelor didactice prin măsuri specifice de popularizare a experiențelor pozitive în integrare și prin achiziția de informații de ultimă oră din literatura psihopedagogică de specialitate (Neamțu & Gherghuț, 2000).

Așa cum afirmă A. Glava, C. Glava, (2002), putem concluziona că mediul educațional al grădiniței reprezintă ansamblul factorilor naturali și sociali, materiali și spirituali, angajați în activitatea de formare și dezvoltare a personalității copilului preșcolar, în raport cu

trebuie specifice vîrstei și cu potențialitățile individuale, în beneficiul său și al comunității sociale.

Influența formativă a mediului, a contextului în care are loc procesul educațional este argumentată pertinent în teorii recente ale psihologiei dezvoltării: teoria achiziției abilităților cognitive a lui K. Fisher, conform căreia, nivelul de activare a unei abilități depinde și de contextul particular de stimulare a ei, suportul ambiental fiind deseori hotărâtor în achiziția și dezvoltarea diverselor planuri cognitive, concepția reprezentanților școlii de psihologie socială de la Geneva, conform cărora dezvoltarea cognitivă este mediată de interacțiunile sociale, la care pot fi adăugate teoria zonei proxime dezvoltării, a lui Vygotski și contribuțiile privind rolul mediator al adultului în dezvoltarea copilului aduse de R. Feuerstein și la noi în țară de cercetările Mariei Roth-Szamoskozi (Glava & Glava, 2002).

Metodologia cercetării

Obiectivele studiului:

- Să evaluăm cunoștințele pe care le dețin/nivelul de pregătire, al cadrelor didactice în domeniul educației incluzive;
- Să determinăm atitudinea cadrelor didactice în raport cu procesul de integrare al copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale în grădiniță;
- Să identificăm strategiile educaționale utilizate de cadrele didactice în procesul de incluziune al copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale;

Ipoteza

Cadrele didactice care au pregătire formală și informală corespunzătoare (nivel de pregătire > 50 %, conform grilei de interpretare a rezultatelor) în domeniul educației integrate, manifestă o atitudine pozitivă (nivelul atitudinii > 50 %, conform grilei de interpretare a rezultatelor) față de integrarea acestor copii în grădiniță.

Descrierea participantilor

Pentru realizarea acestui studiu au acceptat să participe 42 de educatoare/profesori pentru învățământul preșcolar din mai multe grădinițe de masă din județul Cluj, care întâmpină dificultăți în procesul de integrare/incluziune a copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale în grupele de copii cu dezvoltare normală la care lucrează.

Prezentarea instrumentarului

În derularea acestui studiu am folosit metoda anchetei, iar ca instrument de lucru chestionarul. Pentru culegerea datelor s-a folosit un chestionar de opinii care să evidențieze pregătirea formală și informală precum și atitudinea cadrelor didactice cu privire la integrarea copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale în grădiniță.

Interpretarea rezultatelor

Din analiza chestionarelor reies următoarele:

La întrebarea, "Care este atitudinea dumneavoastră față de copiii cu cerințe educative speciale?", datele rezultate, indică faptul că un procent de 14,3% dintre cadrele didactice chestionate afirmă că atitudinea lor față de copiii cu cerințe educative speciale este de *toleranță*, restul afirmând că au o atitudine de *acceptare, sprijin / sprijin și acceptare* față de acești copii. Nici un cadru didactic nu a afirmat că are atitudine de *indiferență* față de copiii cu cerințe educative speciale.

La întrebarea, „În grupele la care lucrezi, există copii cu cerințe educative speciale?”, 73,8% dintre cadrele didactice chestionate au în grupă copii cu cerințe educative speciale iar, un procent de 26,2% afirmă că nu au în grupă copii cu cerințe educative speciale.

La întrebarea, "Care sunt motivele pentru care părintele unui copil cu cerințe educative speciale optează pentru o grădiniță de masă?", un procent de 85,7% au afirmat că „*dreptul la o șansă egală cu a celorlalți copii*” este motivul principal pentru care părinții optează pentru grădiniță de masă.

La întrebarea, „Cât de importantă considerați că este relația grădiniță-familie în procesul de integrare a copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale?”, pe o scală de la 1 la 10, unde 1 este foarte puțin important iar 10 foarte important, toate cele 42 de cadre didactice chestionate au apreciat ca fiind „foarte importantă” colaborarea grădiniță-familie în procesul de integrare a copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale în grădiniță.

La întrebarea „*Sunteți de părere că locul unui copil cu cerințe educative speciale este într-o grădiniță de masă*” 38% dintre cadrele didactice au spus „Da”, iar 31% au răspuns cu „Nu”. 31% au spus că „Nu știu”.

La întrebarea, „Care credeți că este principala cauză pentru care unii copii cu cerințe educative speciale sunt marginalizați sau excluși din grădiniță de masă”, 45,2% dintre cadrele didactice chestionate au apreciat că „*lipsa de pregătire specială și experiență a cadrelor didactice*” este principala cauză pentru care unii copii cu cerințe educative speciale sunt marginalizați sau excluși din grădiniță de masă, peste 50% apreciind că „*înțelegerea redusă a nevoilor acestor copii*” precum și „*incapacitatea de adaptare la cerințele grădiniței de masă*” reprezintă cauza marginalizării și excluderii din grădiniță a acestor copii. Unele cadre didactice au răspuns combinând aceste forme de răspuns.

Un procent de 14,3% dintre cadrele didactice participante la acest studiu apreciază „*integrarea în grădiniță de masă*” ca fiind cea mai indicată soluție pentru integrarea copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale, 21,4% apreciind că „*integrarea în grupe speciale în grădiniță de masă*” ar fi cea mai indicată soluție pentru integrarea acestor copii iar, un procent de 50% apreciază că cea mai bună soluție „*grădiniță specială sau grădiniță de masă în funcție de caz*”.

Un procent de 61,9% dintre cadrele participante la studiu sunt de părere că „*prezența în permanență în grădiniță a cadrelor didactice specializate (consilier școlar, logoped)*” reprezintă condiția principală pentru o integrare optimă a copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale, precum și participarea cadrelor didactice la programe de formare în domeniul educației incluzive. 9,5% dintre cadrele didactice afirmă că „*un număr mai mic de copii în grupă*” ar contribui la integrarea optimă a copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale, iar 11,9% spun că o condiție importantă în procesul integrării o reprezintă „*adaptarea spațiilor la nevoile acestor copii*”.

Concluzii

Prin realizarea acestui studiu ne-am propus investigarea nivelului de pregătire a cadrelor didactice din învățământul preșcolar, în domeniul educației incluzive precum și atitudinea acestora față de integrarea copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale în grădiniță.

În privința celor presupuse în ipoteza 1, acestea se regăsesc în cazul a 34 de cadre didactice dintr-un total de 42 chestionate.

Referitor la *nivelul de pregătire formală și informală*, au rezultat următoarele:

- Conform criteriilor de apreciere a rezultatelor, s-a obținut următoarea distribuție pe calificativele acordate: 18 subiecți – foarte bine, 18 subiecți – bine, 6 subiecți – satisfăcător și 0 subiecți - nesatisfăcător
- 35,7% dintre cadrele didactice chestionate consideră că atitudinea societății față de copiii cu cerințe educative speciale este de *toleranță*, 33% consideră că societatea are o atitudine de *acceptare* față de acești copii și tot 33% afirmă că societatea are o atitudine de *indiferență*. Doar 2% consideră că atitudinea societății este cea de *sprijin*.
- Peste 80% dintre cei chestionați consideră că „*dreptul la o șansă egală cu a celorlalți copii*” reprezintă motivul pentru care părinții unui copil cu cerințe educative speciale aleg o grădiniță de masă. Ceilalți afirmă că părinții aleg grădinița de masă pentru a

facilita mai apoi integrarea copilului în școala de masă, dar și pentru ca acesta să stabilească relații interpersonale adecvate.

- Cadrele didactice chestionate apreciază în proporție de 100% că relația grădiniță – familie este „foarte importantă” în procesul de integrare al acestor copii.
- În proporție de 60%, cadrele didactice consideră că la baza dificultăților de integrare a copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale stau următorii factori: cadrele didactice slab pregătite în domeniul educației incluzive precum și lipsa de implicare a familiei în procesul educativ. Doar 12% consideră că potențialul intelectual limitat al acestor copii ar fi factorul care stă la baza dificultăților de integrare.
- Peste 60% dintre cei chestionați consideră că cei mai importanți factori în procesul de integrare al acestor copii sunt reprezentanți de relațiile socio-afective stabilite între copil-copil, copil-educatoare, adaptarea curriculară până la personalizare precum și prezența consilierului școlar. Restul consideră că activitățile și evaluarea diferențiată reprezintă factorul care contribuie la integrarea acestor copii.
- 50% dintre cadrele didactice afirmă că înțelegerea redusă a nevoilor acestor copii precum și lipsa de experiență a cadrelor didactice sunt principalele cauze pentru care acești copii sunt marginalizați sau excluși din grădinița de masă. Tot 50% afirmă că principala cauză a marginalizării acestor copii este reprezentată de incapacitatea lor de a se adapta la cerințele grădiniței de masă.
- referitor la condițiile care ar trebui să existe în grădinițele de masă în vederea integrării optime a acestor copii, cadrele didactice au afirmat în proporție de 80% necesitatea existenței în grădiniță a cadrelor didactice cu pregătire specializată (profesor de sprijin, consilier școlar, logoped) precum și reducerea numărului de copii la grupă.
- 50% dintre cei chestionați au vârsta cuprinsă între 31 și 40 de ani, iar 33% au vârsta cuprinsă între 41 și 50 de ani.
- 86% dintre cadrele didactice participante la studiu sunt de pregătire profesori în învățământul preșcolar.
- 50% au gradul didactic I, 31% au gradul didactic II, restul având grad didactic definitiv sau nu au grad didactic.

În ce privește *atitudinea cadrelor didactice* față de integrarea copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale, au rezultat următoarele:

- conform criteriilor de apreciere a rezultatelor, s-a obținut următoarea distribuție pe calificativele acordate: 3 subiecți – foarte bine, 8 subiecți – bine, 23 subiecți – satisfăcător și 8 subiecți – nesatisfăcător
- în proporție de 76% dintre cadrele didactice au o atitudine de sprijin și acceptare față de integrarea copiilor cu cerințe educative speciale, doar 14% afirmând că atitudinea lor este de toleranță.
- 74% dintre cadrele didactice participante la studiu au în grupă copii cu cerințe educative speciale.
- 74% au integrat copii cu tulburări din categoria socio-afective, tulburări de limbaj și dificultăți de învățare. Doar 14% dintre cadrele didactice au integrat copii cu deficiențe senzoriale (auz, văz). Cadrele didactice au apreciat că tulburările socio-afective sunt mai greu abordabile pentru că solicită cadrul didactic mai mult decât copiii cu dezvoltare normală.
- 38% dintre cei chestionați afirmă că locul unui copil cu cerințe educative speciale este într-o grădiniță de masă, 31% spun că nu, iar 31% nu știu.
- 50% spun că un copil cu cerințe educative speciale trebuie integrat într-o grădiniță de masă sau grădiniță specială, în funcție de caz, 21% spun că acești copii trebuie integrați

în grupe speciale din grădiniță de masă, 14% spun că acești copii trebuie integrați în grădiniță de masă și 14% spun că acești copii trebuie integrați în grădiniță specială.

- 40% dintre cei chestionați spun că dacă ar avea un copil cu cerințe educative speciale ar dori ca acesta să învețe într-o grupă specială din grădiniță de masă, 36% afirmă că în grădiniță de masă, iar 24% în grădiniță specială.

În ce privește *strategiile educaționale* propuse de cadrele didactice, se regăsesc următoarele: cei mai mulți spun că un număr mai mic de copii în grupă și formarea cadrelor didactice ar ajuta la buna funcționare a activităților educaționale.

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HEALTH EDUCATION IN ROMANIAN PRIMARY EDUCATION. CURRICULAR ANALYZES

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Abstract. *The health of primary school pupils is influenced by the habits they adopt daily. The purpose of this study is to summarize aspects related to how health education is carried out in Romanian primary education. This research study includes an analysis of the school curricula for subjects studied in primary education and was conducted in order to determine their role in the formation of healthy living habits. In this regard, contents/content areas, as well as competencies closely related to this field were selected. Analyzing the school curricula of the compulsory subjects studied in primary education, we can conclude that they encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Also, the main defining elements of the school curriculum for the "Health Education" elective subject were summarized. Analyzing the results of recent studies, the content of teaching aids that could be used to teach the subject of Health Education in primary education and current school curricula, we believe that much more attention should be paid to nutrition education activities. We believe that such programs should start with preschool education. It is also necessary to put more emphasis in schools on activities in this field, by implementing programs in which specialized medical staff or nutritionists would take part. In order to increase the effectiveness of health education programs, meetings with parents should be organized, with the participation of medical specialists. It would also be useful to make printed teaching materials, audio or audiovisual, that are attractive to pupils or parents. The topic of this article is current, given the fact that the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health are currently working on a common strategy related to the way that health education activities should be carried out in schools.*

Keywords: health education, balanced nutrition, healthy lifestyle, child welfare, primary education

Introduction

School is the ideal space for educational activities that promote a healthy lifestyle (Adamowitch, Gugglberger & Dür, 2017; Samdal & Rowling, 2011; Buijs, 2009). Health education programs conducted in schools have positive effects both in the short and in the long term (Brunello, Fort, Schneeweis Winter-Ebmer, 2015). In recent years, in many countries of the world, special attention has been paid to health education programs organized in schools. Some of the programs are carried out with the support of external partners, such as NGOs, agencies, etc. (Boot, Assema, Hesdahl & Vries, 2010). In this study, we

aimed to perform an analysis of the school curricula for compulsory subjects studied by pupils in primary education. The main objective of this study was to establish which of the skills formed by primary school subjects are closely related to the field of health education. We also set out to discover the parents' opinion on how health education programs should be implemented in Romanian primary education and what topics would be useful to address in educational activities with pupils or with parents. Currently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more and more attention is being paid to how health education programs should be implemented in schools. In order to carry out this study, curricular documents from primary education were studied and a questionnaire-based survey was conducted, in which parents of primary school pupils participated. We also set out to make recommendations on how health education programs should be run in schools, based on current realities and the vision of parents and pupils on how these programs should be implemented effectively.

Literature review

Parents have a responsibility for the well-being and quality of life of their children. Given the fact that students spend most of their time outside the school environment, it is necessary to carry out actions to inform parents about the characteristics of a healthy lifestyle (Pop, 2019). The effective implementation of the "Health Promoting School" concept involves changes in the curriculum, the school environment, and the local community (Lee, Lo, Li, Keung & Kwong, 2020). The way that the concept of Health Promoting Schools (HPS) has been implemented in schools, varies from one educational institution to another, depending on the existing local requirements. Thus, in schools, the original concept has been implemented in different ways, and the results of such health education programs can vary significantly (Adamowitch, Gugglberger & Dür, 2017; Samdal & Rowling, 2011). Coherent work strategies need to be developed, based on planning, coordination, and collaboration activities, in order to ensure the effectiveness of health education programs, (Adamowitch, Gugglberger & Dür, 2017; Macnab, Gagnon & Stewart, 2014). Health education programs need to be customized to the needs of the pupils (Keshavarz, Nutbeam, Rowling, Khavarpour, 2010; Heesch, Hepple, Dingle, & Freeman, 2018).

The work plan should be established after analyzing the knowledge needs of the pupils or the parents and by mobilizing all existing resources (Adamowitch, Gugglberger & Dür, 2017; Aldinger, Xin-Wei, Li-Qun, Jun-Xiang, SenHai & Jones, 2008). The school curriculum must be relevant and contribute to the development of authentic life skills. Most health education programs address topics such as prevention, smoking, mental health, aggressive behavior, healthy eating, road safety education, emotional health, social health, physical activity, consumption and abuse of toxic substances, etc. (Aldinger, Xin-Wei, Li-Qun, Jun-Xiang, SenHai & Jones, 2008; St Leger & Young, 2009). The duration of the program and the frequency of activities can influence their efficiency (Stewart-Brown, 2006). The most effective health education programs are those that promote mental health, nutrition, and physical activity (Stewart-Brown, 2006). Also, cooperation between school staff and teamwork are important factors in the development of health education programs (Flaschberger, Nitsch, & Waldherr, 2012).

In order to test the efficiency of the health education programs implemented in schools, it is necessary to develop longitudinal research studies. This research may also focus on how these programs have contributed to the implementation of organizational change (Deschesnes, Trudeau & Kebe, 2009). The availability of teachers to be actively involved in the development of education programs is influenced by the positive effects attributed to their actions on the pupils' health and the school environment. Other relevant factors are the perceived impact of the program on relationships with the school staff, the quality of

relationships with parents, and pupil behavior (Viig, Tjomsland & Wold, 2010; Jourdan, Stirling, McNamara, & Pommier, 2011).

Methodology

In this study, the curricula for the primary school subjects were analyzed. The "Language and Communication" curricular area includes the subjects "Romanian Language and Literature" (or "Communication in Romanian" if the subject is taught in preparatory grade, first grade, or second grade) and Modern Language. The provisions of these school curricula were analyzed in order to establish if the subjects included in this curricular area allow the realization of activities from the field of health education. In this study, we have decided to highlight examples of general competencies and specific competencies related to health education, included in the school curriculum. The specific competencies are derived from the general competencies and are formed during a school year. General competencies refer to the acquisitions that pupils must attain while studying a subject. We have started from the premise that the competencies of the pupils to maintain effective relationships with others and to observe effective communication rules positively influence the emotional health of the children.

The school curricula included in this curricular area recommend the organization of learning situations that involve the development of children's communication skills. Thus, it is recommended to carry out learning activities that simulate real or imaginary life situations, such as role-play, dialogues, the use of presentation, greeting, addressing, request formulas applicable in various contexts, practicing the rules of efficient communication (see table 1).

School subject	Grade	Specific competencies (extracted from the school curricula)
Communication in Romanian	Preparatory grade	2.3. Participating with interest in short dialogues, in usual communication situations 3.4. Expressing in their own words the messages rendered on visual or auditory support, manifesting interest in working with the book
	First grade	2.3. Participating with interest in simple dialogues, in different communication contexts 3.4. Expressing interest in reading simple texts, supported by imagistic support
	Second grade	2.3. Participating with interest in dialogues, in different communication contexts 3.4. Expressing interest in reading age-appropriate books
Romanian Language and Literature	Third grade	2.5. Adapting speech to different communication situations depending on the dialogue partner 3.6. Appreciating the value of books
	Fourth grade	2.5. Manifesting an interest in participating in oral interactions 3.6. Manifesting an interest in literary reading and information

Table 1. Examples of specific competencies included in the school curricula for certain subjects within the "Language and communication" curricular area, closely related to the health education field

In the study of Communication in Romanian subjects, these competencies could be achieved through the following content areas: "Oral communication" and "Reading". In the 3rd and 4th grades, the content areas "Language Functions" and "Text" could be used. As can be seen, the subjects included in this curricular area contribute to the formation of communication skills, the emergence of healthy lifestyle habits, and facilitate the creation of favorable interpersonal interactions with others. Thus, it contributes to maintaining the emotional and social health of children. Also, through the study of the Modern Language subject, pupils acquire effective communication and relationship skills with others.

Throughout primary school, pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors by participating in oral interactions and reading activities. Thus, pupils will participate in reading projects and activities in the library or classroom, keep reading journals, meet writers or initiate correspondence with them, visit museums and memorial houses, participate in contests related to the number of books read, etc.

The subjects included in the "Mathematics and natural sciences" curricular area, include specific competencies and content closely related to health education. The competencies included in the table below through the content fields Life Sciences, respectively Earth Sciences. Through the study of the subject, life skills are developed, through which physical health and environmental health can be maintained (see table 2).

School subject	Grade	Specific competencies (extracted from the school curricula)
Mathematics and environmental exploration	Preparatory grade	3.2. Manifestation of concern for correct behavior in relation to the family environment 4.2. Identifying the "if ... then..." relationships between two successive events
	First grade	3.2. Manifesting concern for correct behavior in relation to the natural environment 4.2. Identifying consequences of simple actions, phenomena, processes
	Second grade	3.2. Manifesting concern for correct behavior in relation to the natural and social environment 4.2. Formulation of consequences resulting from the observation of simple relationships, phenomena, processes
Natural Sciences	Third grade	3.1. Recognizing the consequences of a healthy lifestyle on one's body 3.2. Recognizing the consequences of one's behavior on the environment
	Fourth grade	3.1. Identifying common ways to stay healthy 3.2. Identifying ways to protect the environment

Table 2. Examples of specific competencies included in the school curricula for the subjects within the "Mathematics and natural sciences" curricular area, closely related to the health education field

The subjects included in the "Man and society" curricular area include close content related to the adoption of correct behaviors in relation to oneself and other members of society. These behaviors help maintain a positive emotional state. By studying the subjects within this curricular area, pupils are endowed with life skills that contribute to maintaining spiritual health, emotional health, and social health (see table 3).

School subject	Grade	Specific competencies (extracted from the school curricula)
Religion	Preparatory grade	2.2. Identifying common and differentiating elements between people
	First grade	2.2. Observation of elements of diversity within the different groups
	Second grade	2.2. Description of elements of diversity within different groups
	Third grade	2.2. Description of some types of relationships and social attitudes, from the perspective of religious morality, starting from concrete situations
	Fourth grade	2.2. Analyzing some types of relationships and social attitudes, from the perspective of religious morality, starting from concrete situations
History	Fourth grade	4.2. Recognizing the similarities and differences between oneself and the other, between individuals and groups
Geography	Fourth grade	4.2. Gaining interest in understanding the role of the environment in the life and work of society
Civic education	Third grade	3.1. Positive relationships, in small groups, to solve simple work tasks
	Fourth grade	3.1. Positive relationships with others, in solving simple work tasks

Table 3. Examples of specific competencies included in the school curricula for the subjects within the "Man and society" curricular area, closely related to the health education field

The life skills that are to be formed through the study of the subjects within the "Physical education, sports and health", "Arts" and "Technologies" curricular areas are closely related to the physical health and emotional health of children. Subjects within the "Counseling and guidance" subject contribute to maintaining the social, physical, and emotional health of children (see table 4).

School subject	Grade	Specific competencies (extracted from the school curricula)
Personal development	Preparatory grade	Manifesting interest in self-knowledge and positive attitude towards oneself and others
	First grade	Appropriate expression of emotions in interaction with familiar children and adults
	Second grade	

Table 4. Examples of specific competencies included in the school curricula for the subjects within the "Counseling and guidance" curricular area, closely related to the health education field

From our point of view, the curriculum for the "Health Education" elective subject should be revised because the document went into force 16 years ago, before the introduction of the preparatory class in primary education. At the same time, the curricula is focused on knowledge formation and it is not constructed according to the competency-focused

curriculum design model. Also, in a small number of schools in our country, this subject is taught as an elective subject.

The questionnaire survey method was also used. Thus, parents and pupils enrolled in the fourth grade completed a questionnaire consisting of 4 questions on how health education programs should be conducted in primary education in our country. Through this research, we set out to answer questions such as:

- What topics should be selected, in the opinion of the pupils and the parents, in order to carry out activities within the health education programs?
- What are the institutions with which the educational units should conclude partnership agreements, during the implementation of the project?

The sample of participants consisted of 235 parents of primary school pupils. The questionnaire was distributed in the 2019-2020 school year (see Annex 1). Most parents (232 from 235 participants) and most of the pupils (65 from 67 respondents) would agree that a health education program should be implemented at the school level, and the program should be addressed to both parents and primary school pupils (see Figure 1).

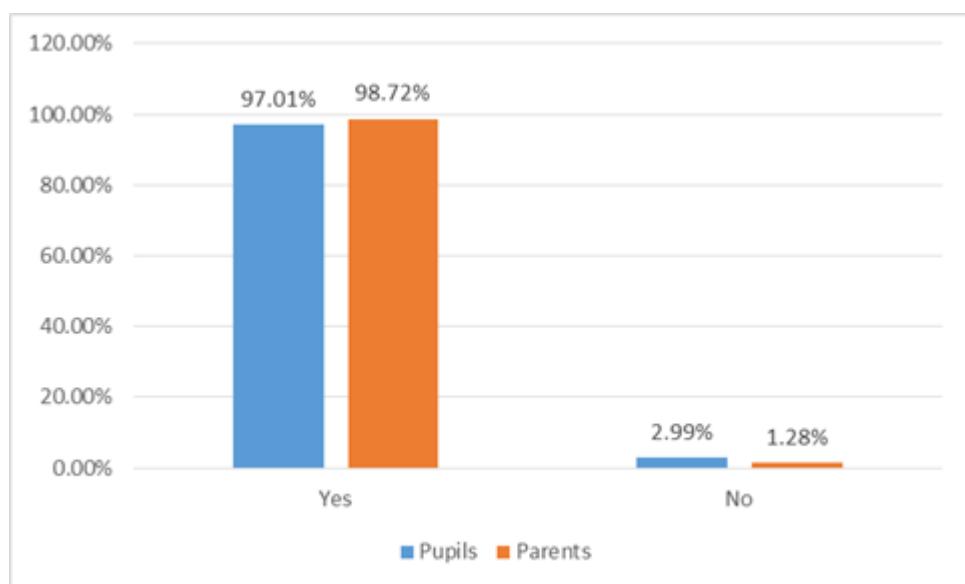


Figure 1. Comparative results regarding the implementation of health education programs

Through the second question, parents were asked to mention which categories of medical staff they would like to be actively involved in running health education programs. Thus, in the opinion of the parents, these programs should be attended by nutritionists, pediatricians, medical staff providing emergency medical services and qualified first aid, dentists, ophthalmologists, but also medical staff with other medical specialties, such as psychiatrists or psychotherapists (see Figure 2). The same questionnaire was distributed in the 2019-2020 school year to 4th grade pupils (see Table 5).

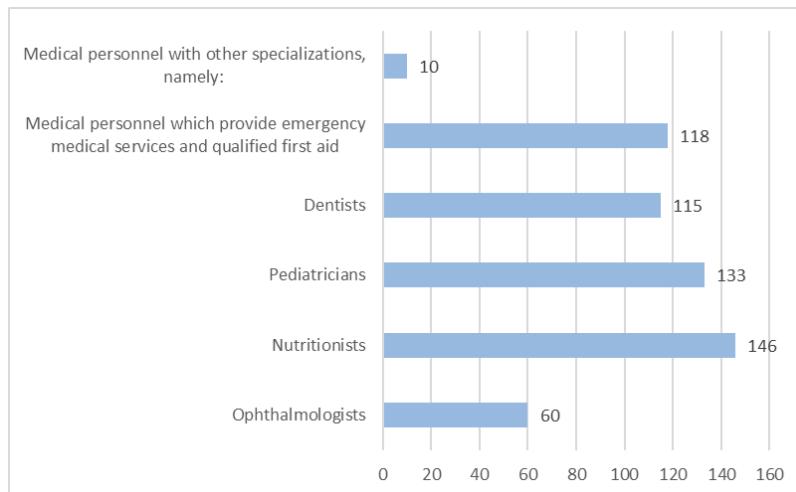


Figure 2. Medical personnel that should be invited to participate in the school activities

	Parents	Pupils
Ophthalmologists	25.53%	33.85%
Nutritionists	62.13%	52.30%
Pediatricians	56.59%	47.69%
Dentists	48.94%	38.46%
Medical personnel who provide emergency medical services and qualified first aid	50.21%	20%
Medical personnel with other specializations, namely	4.26%	0%

Table 5. Comparative analysis of parents' and pupils' opinions

Through question number 3, we aimed to identify the parents' opinions on the topics of the workshops for parents and pupils. Most parents and pupils believe that special importance should be given to children's healthy eating. Also, other relevant topics are emotional health, healthy daily habits, and ways to prevent accidents and first aid rules. Parents who opted for another answer showed that pupils should be taught how to react in emergencies and how to use the 112 Emergency Service correctly. Most pupils believe that it would be useful for health education programs to take place in schools and for medical staff to participate in educational activities (see Figure 3 and Table 6).

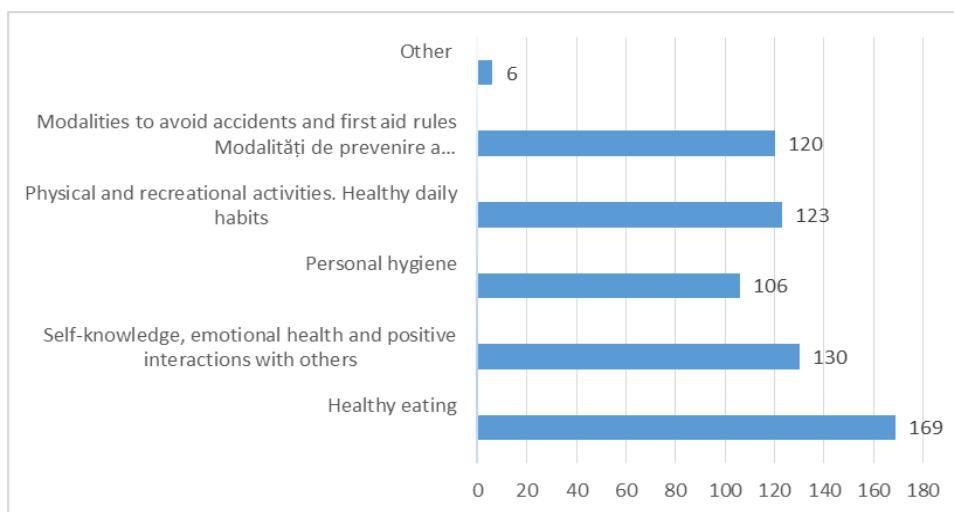


Figure 3. Parents' opinion regarding the topic of the educational activities

	Parents	Pupils
Healthy eating	71.91%	46.15%
Self-knowledge, emotional health and positive interactions with others	55.32%	26.15%
Personal hygiene	45.11%	27.69%
Physical and recreational activities. Healthy daily habits	52.34%	26.15%
Modalities to avoid accidents and first aid rules	51.06%	15.38%
Other response	25.53%	0%

Table 6. Comparative analysis of parents' and pupils' opinions

Parents were asked to identify institutions or members of the local community with which school employees would benefit from collaborating during this program. Thus, a series of partners were identified, among which we mention: local hospital, town hall, school office, pharmacies, local restaurants, dental offices, pediatric offices, nutrition offices, Police, psychological offices, Children's Club, sports clubs, NGOs, Ambulance/SMURD service, libraries, Firefighter departments, canteens, school counselors, grocery stores, qualified sports teachers, social services, including health mediators. Most pupils wanted educational institutions to cooperate with local restaurants, hospitals, town halls, pharmacies, the school's medical office, the police and other local medical offices (see table 7).

	Parents	Pupils
Town hall	43.83%	16.42%
Hospital	59.57%	25.37%
The school's medical office	40.85%	7.46%
Pharmacies	12.77%	14.93%
Local restaurants	11.49%	52.23%
Other	24.25%	4.48%

Table 7. Comparative analysis of parents' and pupils' opinions

In Table 8, the topics of the activities from the health education field considered relevant by parents and pupils, were associated with subjects studied in the primary school system.

Topics considered relevant by parents and pupils	School subjects
Healthy eating	Mathematics and environmental exploration Natural Sciences
Self-knowledge, emotional health and positive interactions with others	Communication in Romanian Romanian Language and Literature Personal Development Modern Language Religion History Civic Education Physical Education

	Game and movement
Personal hygiene and preventive behaviors	Mathematics and environmental exploration Natural Sciences Physical Education Personal Development
Physical activities and recreational activities. Healthy daily habits	Communication in Romanian Romanian Language and Literature Communication in the Modern Language Mathematics and environmental exploration Natural Sciences Game and movement Music and movement Physical Education Personal Development
Environmental health	Mathematics and environmental exploration Natural Sciences Geography
Ways to prevent accidents and first aid rules	Physical Education
Gender differences and family roles	Personal Development Civic Education

Table 8. School subjects associated with school topics identified with the help of parents and pupils

Recent studies have shown that certain primary school pupils have unhealthy eating habits, including frequent consumption of fast food, low consumption of fruits and vegetables, the absence of one or more main meals of the day (breakfast, lunch, or dinner), frequent consumption of foods rich in sugar, etc. Thus, we believe that more attention needs to be paid to nutrition education. Table 9 presents contents and content areas through which healthy eating habits are formed during the primary school cycle.

Topics considered relevant by parents and pupils	Subject	Grade	Content areas/ Contents
Healthy eating	Mathematics and environmental exploration	Preparatory grade	Life sciences (Food as an energy source: the importance of food for growth and development; food hygiene)
		Second grade	Life sciences (Maintaining health - diet, personal hygiene, exercise, etc.)
	Natural Sciences	Fourth grade	Life sciences (Man - maintaining good health; Balanced diet, exercise)

Table 9. Subjects through which nutritional education is carried out in primary education

The school curriculum should pay greater attention to nutrition education activities, simple first aid rules, and to methods of intervention in emergencies.

Conclusion

School curricula for primary school subjects include general competencies, specific competencies, as well as contents/content areas closely related to the field of health education. Most parents believe that there is a need for coherent programs in schools regarding the development of health education programs, and some parents want health education programs not to address issues related to sex education (Marin, Bocos, Calin & Cordos, 2020). Also, health education programs should highlight the role of prevention in maintaining the health of the pupils, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Marin, Bocos, Calin & Cordos, 2020). We mention the fact that the questionnaire-based survey was completed by a small number of participants from a single educational institution, and national representation was not ensured.

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AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE APPLIED IN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract: *The paper presents the main characteristics of an ecological assessment in the process of social work in schools. The ability to assess and treat students properly is at the core of providing school social work services. School social workers contribute with an essential dimension to the assessment of students through the use of an ecological perspective, which considers the child's family and neighborhood. Holistic assessments of children and adolescents in the public schools should include information from collaborative sources, such as parents, teachers, and medical personnel who are involved with the students. The assessment process, referred to as a dynamic diagnosis, seeks to identify the issue or unmet needs, the psychological, physical, or social factors contributing to the problem existence or prevalence, the effects the issue has on the individual's functioning and wellbeing (and that of others), what solution is sought, and what resources are available within the client, in his environment, and organized services that can be used to for problem solving. To make a complete needs assessment and intervention plan is one of the main ethical responsibilities required from social workers by state licensing boards. An assessment should begin with the first interview, which sets the tone for the entire intervention. First interviews with students and their parents often determine if the school social worker will be successful in working with the child. Social workers need to plan ahead to assure that this first meeting will be positive one. An effective assessment depends on a positive and productive relationship with the child. Children are very sensitive about rejection and become defensive if they feel someone does not accept them. This is particularly true for those children who have already been rejected at school by peers or teachers. These fragile students will not trust or like someone whom they feel is biased against them.*

Keywords: school social work services, ecological perspective, holistic assessment, dynamic diagnosis, positive and productive relationship

Introducere

Lucrarea își propune să prezinte procesul de asistență socială școlară, utilizând perspectiva ecologică în evaluarea nevoilor, problemelor sau a etapei de evaluare-diagnostic. Abordarea ecologică în asistență socială a fost dezvoltată pe baza celei similare, utilizată biologie, care înțelege toate organismele vii în interacțiunile dinamice cu mediile lor sociale și fizice, și examinează schimburile dintre diferite sisteme. Aplicarea ecologiei în ceea ce privește practica asistenței sociale implică o înțelegere și abordare a clienților în sensul în care aceștia se află într-o interacțiune dinamică cu mediile lor fizice, sociale și culturale (Gitterman & Germain, 2008 p.61). *Mediul fizic* include acele componente geografice și de structură administrativ-teritorială în care oamenii trăiesc, *mediile sociale* se referă la interacțiunile cu familia, grupul de prieteni, rețelele sociale și comunitare, precum și structurile sociale care modelează și reglementează existența și funcționarea oamenilor în societate. *Aspectul cultural al mediului* implică acele valori, norme și credințe care modelează opiniile, perspectivele și așteptările individuale (Gitterman & Germain, 2008 p.62).

Școlile oferă elevilor o experiență formativă; experiențele pe care copiii le trăiesc în timpul petrecut la școală pot fi pozitive și benefice dezvoltării lor sau pot negative, demotivante. Interacțiunile pe care elevii le au cu profesorii sau colegii pot fi o sursă de placere, de bucurie sau, din contră, o sursă de înstrăinare. Pe de altă parte, unii elevi nu se adaptează în mod corespunzător la mediul școlar din cauza unor situații familiale stresante și ostile. În sens tradițional, mediul școlar a solicitat elevilor să se conformeze așteptărilor și normelor școlare, iar cei care nu au îndeplinit aceste așteptări și cerințe ale școlii au fost deseori excluși, abandonați. Cu toate acestea, în prezent, reglementările legale impun instituțiilor școlare să își adapteze așteptările și cerințele nevoilor și potențialului elevilor și să ofere un mediu educațional în care orice elev să poată beneficia de serviciile educaționale.

Capacitatea școlilor de a se adapta nevoilor și particularităților fiecărui elev reprezintă esența serviciilor de asistență socială școlară. Elevul nu poate fi înțeles doar din perspectiva restrânsă a rolului său de elev, el trebuie privit și evaluat într-un cadru ecologic, care are în vedere și alte sisteme cu care acesta este în interacțiune (NASW, 2012, p.49). Evaluarea elevilor trebuie realizată într-o manieră interdisciplinară și transdisciplinară, să genereze un conținut informațional care să provină din diferite surse precum: familia, cadrele didactice, sistemul medical sau grupul de prieteni. Evaluarea este definită de Perlman (1957, p.105) drept un *diagnostic dinamic*, care *încearcă să stabilească care este problema, să determine factorii psihologici, fizici sau sociali care o generează, care este efectul asupra funcționării și bunăstării clientului (și a altor persoane), ce soluție se impune, care sunt resursele de care dispune clientul și care sunt serviciile care pot fi accesate în vederea soluționării acestei probleme*.

Perspectiva ecologică prespune înțelegerea relației dintre aceste sisteme într-o manieră dinamică, într-un mod în care fiecare se influențează și se modelează reciproc. Conexiunea și influența între diferite sisteme nu au un caracter static, ci mai degrabă acestea evoluează în timp, sub influența unor aspecte de ordin istoric și cultural. Openshaw (2008, p.30) descrie felul în care perspectiva ecologică trece dincolo de o gândire liniară de tip cauză – efect, unde cauza A provoacă efectul B și, prin urmare, A ar deveni ținta intervenției. Perspectiva ecologică se concentrează pe interacțiunea și relația dintre A și B, luând în considerare de asemenea, și factorii de mediu care ar putea influența tipul și calitatea interacțiunii; asistentul social ar putea constata că ținta intervenției nu este nici A, nici B, ci mai degrabă mediul social din care fac parte A și B sau tranzacția maladaptativă dintre persoană și mediul său de viață.

Limbajul și terminologia specifică acestei abordări conține cuvinte precum: adaptabilitate, relații funcționale sau stresante, potrivire între persoană și mediul său. Perspectiva ecologică presupune că indivizii încearcă să mențină și să dezvolte relații adaptative între ei și mediu, să existe o potrivire în ceea ce privește propria capacitate de dezvoltare și resursele existente la un moment dat în mediu, care o pot ajuta și favoriza (Kelly, Raines, Stone, Frey, 2010). Atunci când indivizii nu au acces la resursele necesare (acestea sunt inaccesibile, insuficiente sau inexistente), chiar dacă dețin premisele unei funcționări optime, relația dintre indivizi și mediu este una stresantă, maladaptativă. Asistentul social are sarcina de a colabora cu individul pentru a îmbunătăți calitatea acestei relații, pentru ca tranzacțiile dintre el și mediu să ducă la o funcționare socială optimă; acest lucru este posibil pe de o parte prin schimbarea perceptiilor și comportamentelor individului, iar pe de altă parte, prin schimbarea răspunsului pe care mediul îl oferă.

În practica asistenței sociale școlare, o evaluare completă și detaliată reprezintă premisa de bază a succesului unei intervenții; de aceea perspectiva ecologică oferă cadrul teoretic și conceptual pentru ca elevii să fie înțeleși și ajutați în mod eficient, eficace și echitabil:

- Eficient: dacă scopul intervenției a fost îndeplinit în modul cel mai direct;
- Eficace: dacă au fost obținute cele mai bune rezultate pentru client;

- Echitabil: dacă au fost respectate drepturile tuturor celor implicați în procesul de intervenție.

Evaluarea nevoilor/problemei în procesul de asistență socială școlară

Demersul evaluativ pregătește intervenția socială prin faptul că furnizează acesteia datele necesare și indică principalele direcții de acțiune. În acest scop, evaluarea inițială se centrează pe răspunsul la următoarele întrebări: *Care este problema? Cine este clientul? Ce posibilități există pentru a schimba situația? Cum se va proceda?*

Colectarea datelor despre client și situația sa nu înseamnă că problemele acestuia sunt lăsate deoparte până când asistentul social finalizează evaluarea. Procesul de evaluare în sine implică un anumit tip de ajutor și suport. Pe de altă parte, procesul de evaluare nu se încheie acum; acesta are loc pe un continuum de timp, fiind supus completării și revizuirii pe întreg parcursul relației de asistare.

1. Stabilirea contactului și construirea relației cu elevii

Un plan de evaluare complet este cerut chiar prin prisma valorilor și a codului deontologic al profesiei de asistență socială. Evaluarea inițială ar trebui să înceapă cu un interviu, care stabilește tonul pentru întreaga relație de asistență socială. Acest interviu inițial determină dacă asistentul social școlar va avea succes în intervenția sa și dacă va putea conlucra cu clientul său pentru îndeplinirea scopului și obiectivelor intervenției. O evaluare eficientă depinde de o relație pozitivă cu elevii; dacă un elev se simte neacceptat și respins, acesta va deveni defensiv și nu va avea încredere în cineva despre care simte că este imparțial sau că din atitudinea sa transpar judecăți asupra sa sau a situației în care se află. Asigurarea succesului în ceea ce privește contactul inițial necesită respectarea valorilor profesionale și o bună planificare. Openshaw (2008, p.31-33) formulează câteva linii directoare care pot ajuta la construirea unei relații pozitive între asistentul social și sistemul său client, elevul, după cum urmează:

- *Să se înceapă cu discuții mici, generale*, care au efectul de spargere a gheții, de a-i face pe elevi sau părinți să se simtă în largul lor, să perceapă interacțiunea cu asistentul social ca una neamenințătoare. Acest moment are potențialul de a crea o atmosferă plăcută, de a îi arăta clientului că poate avea încredere în asistentul social.
- *Întâlnirea să se desfășoare unu-un loc/spațiu confortabil*, care să poată asigura confidențialitatea discuției. Bibliotecile, sălile de clasă nu sunt locuri de întâlnire potrivite pentru a asigura un caracter privat întâlnirilor. Instituțiile școlare trebuie să asigure asistentului social un astfel de spațiu sau încăpere. Pe de altă parte, asistenții sociali trebuie să pledeze ei însăși pentru integritatea serviciilor lor, insistând să primească acces la locuri adecvate pentru întâlnirile cu beneficiarii.
- *Să de pornească de acolo de unde se află elevul/părintele* – prin abordarea oricăror temeri sau preconcepții despre relația de asistență și răspunsul adecvat în acest sens, se asigură neperturbarea procesului terapeutic. Încurajarea exprimării senimentelor clientului și validarea lor în cadrul unui mediu securizant, va ajuta la construirea unei relații de încredere.
- *Să se ofere elevului prezumția de nevinovăție* – este nevoie de o ascultare activă și care să nu lase impresia de scepticism sau neîncredere în ceea ce relatează elevul. Este important ca asistentul social să aibă o atitudine empatică, prin care să înțeleagă perspectiva elevului în ceea ce privește problema sa.
- *Determinarea celor mai importante scopuri și obiective în intervenție*. Clienții trebuie ajutați să priorizeze obiectivele și să încadreze în timp acțiunile și activitățile necesare îndeplinirii acestora.

- *Formularea contractului.* Elevii nu sunt obișnuiți să semneze contracte, însă acest lucru ar putea legitima procesul de asistare și ar duce la creșterea încrederii în asistentul social. O dată stabilit cursul intervenției, clienții asistentului social școlar vor cunoaște periodicitatea cu care vor avea lor întâlnirile viitoare, precum și sarcinile pe care fiecare trebuie să le îndeplinească.
- *Stabilirea întâlnirilor* trebuie să ia în considerare orarul elevilor, al asistentului social, dar și al profesorilor. De aceea, colaborarea cu cadrele didactice este importantă pentru ca asistentul social să se asigure că elevul nu va absenta de la ore pentru a veni la întâlniri. Totodată, profesorii pot furniza informații importante sau chiar critice, vitale despre elevi, care pot avea o mare însemnatate pentru reușita intervenției.
- *Păstrarea evidenței întâlnirilor.* Contractul trebuie respectat și confruntat în cadrul fiecărei întâlniri. Dacă este nevoie ca o programare să fie schimbată, elevul trebuie să știe acest lucru din timp; o dată construită relația de încredere, elevii pot simți profundă dezamăgire dacă asistentul social nu respectă întâlnirile sau dacă reprogramarea are loc în ultimul moment.

2. Procesul de evaluare propriu-zisă

Numeroase instrumente pot fi utilizate în evaluarea clienților serviciilor de asistență socială școlară. Trebuie avut în vedere că utilizarea unui anumit instrument determină formularea obiectivelor și a planului de intervenție.

Scopul unei evaluări este de a identifica și înțelege factorii multipli care generează și contribuie la apariția și menținerea problemei, în aşa fel încât planul de acțiune și intervenție să vizeze exact soluționarea și/sau ameliorarea acesteia. Strategia de evaluare - diagnostic este o condiție prealabilă pentru a planifica, implementa și evalua eficiența și eficacitatea serviciilor utilizate în procesul se asistență socială școlară (Webb, 2003, p.61). Atunci când se stabilește procedura de evaluare și când sunt selectate metodele și instrumentele care vor fi utilizate, trebuie luate în considerare următoarele întrebări de bază:

- ✓ Cine va fi evaluat (elevul, părinții, întreaga familie, colegii de clasă, cartierul)?
- ✓ În ce ordine vor fi evaluați cei implicați direct sau indirect în relația de asistență socială? Cine și ce ar trebui evaluat prima dată?
- ✓ Ce informații suplimentare ar trebui obținute (rapoarte școlare, fișe medicale, fișe psihologice)?
- ✓ Care sunt instrumentele de evaluare adecvate?
- ✓ Cum ar trebui rezumate și înregistrate datele relevante?
- ✓ Cum ar trebui discutate rezultatele evaluării împreună cu familia sau alte persoane?

Determinarea sistemului client este o componentă importantă a procesului de asistență socială școlară. Majoritatea elevilor trăiesc în cadrul familiilor, iar aceste familii sunt, la rândul lor, supuse influențelor favorabile sau dăunătoare din parte mediul în care se află la un moment dat. O abordare eficientă în evaluarea-diagnostic este cea *tripartită* care are în vedere trei categorii de factori: factorii individuali, factori care țin de situație/context și factori relaționați cu sistemul de sprijin și cu sistemul școlar. Atunci când un elev intră în atenția asistentului social școlar, este imperativ ca practicianul să aibă în minte cele trei categorii de factori pe măsură ce încearcă să înțeleagă dimensiunile și complexitatea situației – problemă (Webb, 2003, p. 64). În figura nr.1 este prezentată evaluarea-diagnostic tripartită, cu cele trei tipuri de factori implicați.

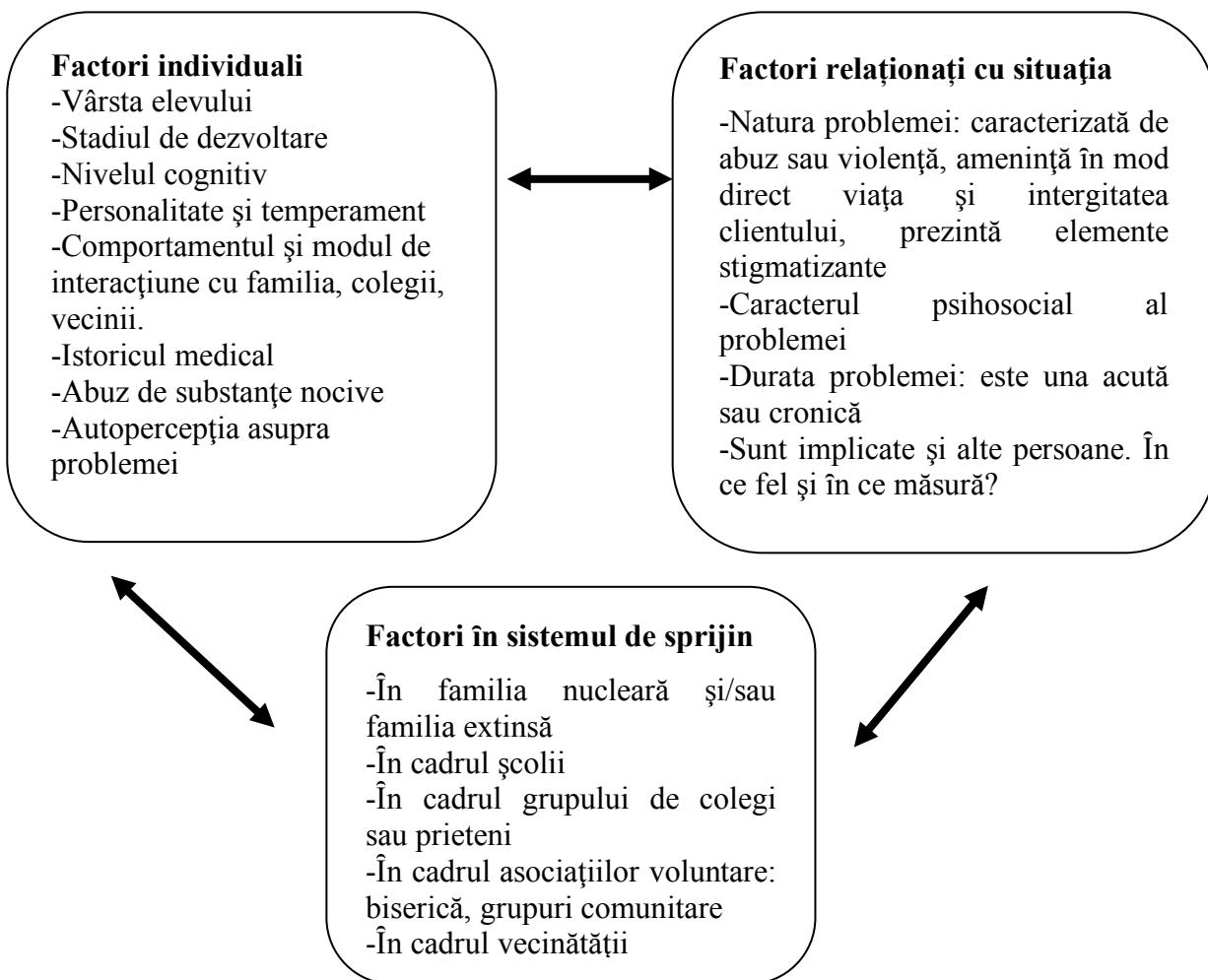


Figura 1. Interacțiunea factorilor în cadrul evaluării - diagnostic tripartite

Din perspectiva evaluării tripartite, Webb (2003, pp. 73-76) a dezvoltat trei grile de evaluare care să ajute asistentul asistență socială școlară în evaluarea celor trei categorii de factori menționați și descriși anterior. Însă, cantitatea de informații care trebuie obținută, înțeleasă și prelucrată poate avea un caracter copleșitor, mai ales pentru un asistent social școlar debutant. De aceea este important de subliniat că scopul colectării acestor date este de a ghida profesionistul în stabilirea obiectivelor și a strategiilor de intervenție și că *asistentul social școlar poate selecta informațiile relevante pentru problema clientului*.

Există o paletă largă de instrumente din care asistentul social școlar poate selecta pe cele mai relevante în evaluarea fiecărui caz în parte; astfel, instrumentarul utilizat în evaluare trebuie personalizat în funcție de particularitățile fiecărui client și specificul fiecărei probleme, și selectate acele care promit să producă cele mai utile informații în formularea unei evaluări specifice, într-un interval de timp rezonabil. Chiar dacă o mai mare cantitate de informații poate să ofere o înțelegere mai amplă a problemei, deseori o organizare din care face parte asistentul social școlar stabilește utilizarea unor anumite metode și instrumente de evaluare specifice. Printre opțiunile de *instrumente dintre care asistentul social școlar poate alege* se numără următoarele: istoricul familial, formularele de evaluare tripartită (Webb, 2003), scala simptomelor de stres posttraumatic la copii (Foa, Johnson, Feeny, & Treadwell, 2001), ecoharta, harta rețelelor sociale, genograma, culturograma (Openshaw, 2008), evaluări psihologice și fișe de evaluare a performanțelor școlare, fișe de observație sau analiza câmpului de forțe.

Hepworth, Rooney și Larsen (2010, p. 199-201) recomandă ca evaluarea nevoilor/problemei să sintetizeze informațiile și să le cuprindă în următoarele categorii relevante:

- Natura problemelor clientului;
- Capacitatea și abilitățile de coping ale clientului;
- Evaluarea punctelor forte și a punctelor slabe, precum și a riscurilor și oportunităților;
- Alte sisteme implicate în generarea sau menținerea problemei;
- Resursele disponibile și resursele necesare;
- Motivația clientului de a se implica în rezolvarea problemelor.

3. Stabilirea obiectivelor și a planului de intervenție

Chiar în timpul culegerii datelor, asistentul social săcolar cântărește continuu semnificația informațiilor identificate și poate începe imediat să genereze ipoteze referitor la problemă/probleme și planul de acțiune. Însă datele obținute trebuie să fie organizate, interpretate și încadrate în teorie și practică pentru a avea semnificație din perspectiva acțiunii și schimbării. Din acest motiv, evaluarea-diagnostic tripartită ajută asistentul social să organizeze datele pentru a putea oferi ulterior o caracterizare a cazului.

O dată ce evaluarea nevoilor/problemei a fost finalizată, planul de intervenție se conturează în termeni de *cine și ce va face, când și în ce mod* vor fi realizate *sarcinile* necesare. De aceea, planurile trebuie să operaționalizeze direcția de acțiune în obiective specifice și sarcini atribuite clientului și asistentului social.

Stabilirea și îndeplinirea obiectivelor oferă cadrul atât de necesar pentru măsurarea calitativă și cantitativă a rezultatelor intervenției și pentru verificarea eficienței și eficacității strategiilor de acțiune selectate. Cu ajutorul asistentului social, elevii trebuie să participe activ la stabilirea și prioritizarea obiectivelor, astfel fiind respectată una dintre valorile de bază ale profesiei de asistent social – aceea a autodeterminării (NASW, 2012, p.51). De cele mai multe ori, obiectivul prioritar vizează schimbarea sau ameliorarea comportamentelor problematice ale elevului în cadrul școlii (Openshaw, 2008, p.41). Din momentul în care acest obiectiv a fost determinat cu claritate, asistentul social poate stabili împreună cu elevul acțiunile concrete pentru îndeplinirea acestuia, precum și persoanele responsabile implicate în acțiune: elevul, profesorii, părinții, asistentul social. De asemenea, stabilirea pașilor în atingerea obiectivului crește șansa obținerii unor rezultate imediate, care vor genera un sentiment de succes, crescând astfel nivelul de angajament/implicare al elevului în cadrul intervenției. Asistentul social trebuie să măsoare gradul și modul de realizare al obiectivelor pentru a putea determina dacă schimbarea s-a întâmplat cu adevărat și să verifice eficacitatea intervenției pe termen mediu și lung (O'Hare, 2005, p. 81).

A fi un asistent social școlar profesionist, care oferă suport copiilor și adolescentilor, în contextul diferitelor direcții de acțiune și intervenție, necesită atenție și înțelegere a contextului social actual, observării și adaptării intervenției în raport cu schimbările culturale, economice și politice, precum și în concordanță cu progresele științifice și profesionale. De fapt, aceasta trebuie să fie esența abordării în practica asistenței sociale școlare și a comunității și societăților în care clienții și familiile lor trăiesc – *practica trebuie să se raporteze la contextul de astăzi nu la contextul de ieri*. Notiunea de *intervenție* trimite în principal către o *acțiune de schimbare planificată* care are ca scop modificarea cursului unor evenimente, modelarea unor comportamente și atitudini, reabilitarea relațiilor interpersonale, gestionarea unor crize și conflicte socio-educationale. Astfel, în linii generale, intervenția în asistență socială școlară implică cel puțin trei direcții: acordarea unui ajutor specific, organizarea unui context socio-educational securizant și acțiune asupra unor indivizi și grupuri pentru a determina schimbări comportamentale, atitudinale și schimbări în practicile școlare.

Dacă, la începutul afirmării serviciilor de asistență socială școlară, principalii clienți erau elevii și familiile lor, în prezent conținutul acestor servicii s-a diversificat substanțial, ele adresându-se și personalului didactic și nondidactic al școlii, unor reprezentanți ai comunității (Neamțu, 2011, p. 839). Planul de intervenție trebuie să includă și să urmărească câteva elemente strategice pentru ca acest demers să aibă un caracter coerent (Allen-Meares, 2015). Aceste elemente, împreună cu indicatorii corespunzători sunt prezentați în tabelul 1.

Planul de intervenție			
Componența planului	Date și informații relevante	Indicatori/ Evaluarea nivelului de implicare	Evaluarea intervenției
I. Nivelul de angajament și implicare al familiei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discuții telefonice sau față în față cu părinții. -Intâlnirile cu părinții și/sau membri ai familiei extinse. -Planuri de îndeplinire a obiectivelor. -Schimbări apărute în tipul și calitatea interacțiunii dintre elev, familia sa și școală. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Comunicare bidirectională între asistentul social școlar și familia elevului. -Numărul vizitelor la domiciliu. -Durata vizitelor la domiciliu. -Accesarea diferitelor tipuri de servicii sociale. -Creșterea nivelului de implicare al familiei în procesul de pregătire școlară al elevului. -Îmbunătățirea calității interacțiunilor dintre personalul școlii și părinți 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Liste ale apelurilor telefonice. -Planuri de stabilire a obiectivelor. -Documente care atestă accesarea unui anumit serviciu. -Documente/rapoarte care demonstrează existența unor interacțiuni pozitive cu personalul școlii. -Relatări din partea cadrilor didactice.
II. Mediul extern și comunitatea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discuții între asistentul social și alte sisteme implicate/părți interesate. -Consultări cu persoane/sisteme cheie din mediu și comunitate. -Observarea dinamicii interacțiunilor dintre sistemul client și mediu. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Protocolale de colaborare cu membri ai școlii și comunității. -Eforturi ale asistentului social de a identifica noi resurse care pot fi antrenate în rezolvarea problemelor clientului. -Direcționarea clientului către alte sisteme și servicii relevante. -Identificarea și accesarea resurselor existente la nivelul comunității. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Înregistrări ale conversațiilor: notițe, reflecții personale. -Fișe de observație. -Documente care atestă accesarea și utilizarea unui serviciu.
III. Colaborarea cu personalul școlii/cu colegii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Discuții cu membri ai personalului școlii, care au un rol relevant din perspectiva intervenției. -Obiective și scopuri comune stabilite împreună cu cadrile didactice. -Observații structurare sau nestructurate, spontane sau nu ale atitudinilor personalului didactic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sesiuni de consultare cu cadrile didactice în ceea ce privește succesul și integrarea școlară a elevilor. -Participarea la întâlniri. -Implicarea personalului școlii în cadrul procesului de rezolvare a problemelor. -Protocolale de colaborare în cadrul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Documentarea conversațiilor și a discuțiilor cu personalul școlii: notițe, rapoarte, reflecții personale. -Înregistrări ale întâlnirilor. -Protocolale scrise de colaborare. -Rapoarte de rezultat.

			intervenției	
IV. Nivelul de angajament și implicare al elevului	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Contractul de servicii între elev și asistentul social. -Fișe de evaluare a elevilor. -Notele și calificativele obținute ca urmare a evaluărilor didactice. -Participarea elevului la cursuri. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Documente școlare care fac referire la performanța și integrarea elevilor (ex: cataloage, fișe de caracterizare și evaluare). -Feedback din partea elevului. -Feedback din partea colegilor. -Feedback din partea familiei 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Documentarea conversațiilor. -Prezența elevului la ore. -Documentarea metodologiei implicată în intervenție. -Documentarea feedback-urilor periodice . 	
V. Angajamentul asistentului social și eficiența intervenției	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Documente care atestă progresul elevului. -Plan de evaluare. -Plan de intervenție. -Justificarea alegerii unei anumite metodologii. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Metodologia de intervenție este justificată, susținută și validată de literatura de specialitate. -Planul de intervenție este adaptat la specificul cultural al elevului și al comunității din care face parte. -Progresul și succesul intervenției poate fi documentat și justificat prin rapoarte și înscrișuri relevante. -Planul de intervenție a fost revizuit și adaptat pe toată durata sa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Orice document sau înregistrare a întâlnirilor cu clientul și alte sisteme implicate în intervenție. -Documentarea metodologiei de evaluare și intervenție și a felului în care aceasta este adaptată nevoilor și individualității elevului. -Documente care relevă progresul elevului. -Jurnale ale asistentului social școlar. -Planul de intervenție. -Rapoarte intermediare și rapoarte finale. 	

Tabelul 1. Structura planului de intervenție în serviciile de asistență socială școlară

Concluzii

Practica asistenței sociale școlare trebuie să se adapteze la realitatea vieții moderne și la contextul educațional actual. Tendințele evidente din practica profesioniștilor sunt următoarele:

1. Conștientizarea multiplilor factori etiologici implicați în problemele psihosocio-educaționale ale elevilor, acordând atenție specială atât factorilor ereditari și de mediu, precum și construirii atașamentului copilului pe perioada copilăriei timpurii și impactul asupra dezvoltării sale ulterioare.
2. Înțelegerea și utilizarea în evaluare a conceptelor de situație de risc, rezistență și reziliență, precum și abordarea clientului din perspectiva punctelor forte.
3. Abordare interdisciplinară și transdisciplinară, precum și stabilirea de parteneriate cu părinții și familia elevilor.
4. Practica asistenței sociale școlare trebuie să fie receptivă la contextul cultural.
5. Metodele de asistență socială școlară (atât cele de culegere a datelor, cât și cele de intervenție) trebuie să fie validate atât din punct de vedere științific, cât și al practicii curente (Allen-Meares, 2013, p.10).

Asistentul social școlar asigură legătura între școală, familie și comunitate, centrarea profesiei fiind pe coordonarea eforturilor școlilor, familiilor și comunităților pentru a ajuta și a susține elevii să se dezvolte din punct de vedere cognitiv, social și emoțional, având în vedere întotdeauna perspectiva holistică a dezvoltării individului în mediu. Asistentul social școlar caută să asigure pentru elevi un mediu și un climat școlar echitabil din punct de vedere al oportunităților și promovează respectul pentru și între elevi (NASW, 2012).

Urmărind ca scop fundamental pregătirea tinerilor pentru integrarea în societate, pe de o parte, și dezvoltarea maximă a potențialului lor, pe de altă parte, școala trebuie să-i ajute pe tineri să se cunoască și să se accepte, săși proiecteze idealuri și să le interiorizeze în identitatea lor, să-i ajute să conștientizeze și să-și asume responsabilitatea pentru a se implica în dezvoltarea societății. Se observă că, dat fiind statutul ei privilegiat, care provine din funcția de asigurare a reproducerei societății, educația, școala contemporană în special, suportă presiuni tot mai mari din partea celorlalte subsisteme ale societății. Aceste presiuni vin dinspre toate sectoarele de activitate, cărora școala le livrează forță de muncă, dar vin și din partea elevilor și părinților; aceștia așteaptă de la școală garanția reușitei inserției sociale, ceea ce înseamnă concomitent prosperitate materială, dezvoltură în relațiile sociale, dar și contribuția activă la construirea societății (Neamțu, p.830).

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ASCERTAINING STUDY REGARDING HEALTH BEHAVIOUR OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract According to different studies, healthy eating and physical activity are very important for children. This is because their nutrition and lifestyle influence their wellbeing, growth and development.

In order to identify the diet and also the daily physical activity of the primary school-aged students with ages between 6 to 10, we developed a study based on a non probabilistic sample of 500 persons. The target group was established by the students' parents. Simultaneously, our study investigates the perception of the parents overlooking the nutrition and physical activities behaviour of the child, both in school and at home.

The chosen method was questionnaire-based investigation and the research tool was an adjusted form of Nutrition Questionnaire. The items were enrolled in the field of objective items, multiple-choice items, semi-objective items, short-answer items and also subjective items. This method focused on the daily child's diet, the alimentary preferences, water and sweets daily consume, the physical activities in which the child is involved and the frequency of them, as well as their interest and the time spent on devices.

The study results offered us important information based on nowadays children's lifestyle and health behaviour, highlighting the importance that parents are giving to these aspects and also the fact that children prove autonomy in some of their decisions. Overviewing the actual circumstances, the fact that a very large number of students engaged in this study own an electronic device connected to the internet, stood out, which automatically implies the extended period of time they spend on them. At the same time, we appreciated that the children have an active lifestyle, adhering to free play or another physical activity of which they are part.

Keywords: health behaviour, nutrition, physical activity, questionnaire

Introducere

Adoptarea unui stil de viață sănătos reprezintă o temă de interes ridicat pentru o varietate de domenii, atât specifice domeniului sănătății, respectiv al nutriției, cât și celui educațional. La nivel european, există diferite programe și proiecte aplicate în cadrul școlilor, care fie au rolul de a preveni unele probleme legate de nutriția necorespunzătoare a copiilor sau lipsa exercițiilor fizice, dar și pentru a le diminua pe cele existente. Și în România se dezvoltă astfel de programe și proiecte din cauza faptului că, în rândul elevilor, alimentația este în cele mai multe cazuri deficitară, iar activitatea fizică se întâlnește din ce în ce mai rar ca practică zilnică. Aceste fapte au fost sesizate și în activitățile profesionale proprii, pe parcursul anilor anterioari. În acest sens, am ales să desfășurăm un studiu prin care să identificăm comportamentele alimentare ale elevilor și frecvența cu care aceștia desfășoară activități fizice susținute, în vederea derulării unui program de educație nutrițională care să aibă ca scop adoptarea unui stil de viață sănătos de către aceștia. Considerăm că această temă de cercetare este una de actualitate și în același timp importantă în viitor, deoarece dacă la

vârsta copilăriei sunt formate anumite comportamente, la vârsta maturității, acestea se mențin. Astfel că ne dorim ca prin intermediul studiului inițiat să contribuim la adoptarea de către elevi și implicit de către familiile acestora, a unui stil de viață sănătos.

Problematica cercetării

În prezent, atât în România cât și celelalte țări europene, există un real interes față de promovarea și adoptarea unui stil de viață sănătos, fapt survenit ca urmare a creșterii numărului de persoane supraponderale, dar și a copiilor care dezvoltă anumite boli digestive sau metabolice încă de la vîrste mici. În acest sens, la nivelul țărilor Uniunii Europene, dar și în SUA, se derulează o serie de proiecte care promovează alimentația echilibrată și introducerea în programul zilnic a exercițiilor fizice, ca reacție a apetenței populației față de alimente de tip fast-food sau procesate, a semipreparatelor și a celor pe bază de zahăr și a petrecerii timpului liber cu utilizarea diverselor device-uri. Dintre acestea amintim: *The Class Moves*, derulat în Scoția și Țara Galilor, *Eat Fit*, în SUA, *Growing Up Healthy*-UK ș.a. De asemenea, o serie de studii susțin importanța alimentației corecte și a activității fizice în creșterea performanțelor școlare ale elevilor, precum și a stării de bine a acestora: *The Association Between School-based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance*- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010; Bradley, Green, 2013, *Do Health and Education Agencies in the United States Share Responsibility for Academic Achievement and Health? A Review of 25 years of Evidence About the Relationship of Adolescents' Academic Achievement and Health Behaviors*; Basch, 2010; *Healthier Students Are Better Learners: A Missing Link in Efforts to Close the Achievement Gap*; Kleinman, Hall, Green, Korzec-Ramirez, Patton, Pagano&Murphy, 2002, *Diet, breakfast, and academic performance in children*; MacLellan , Taylor&Wook, 2008, *Food intake and academic performance among adolescents*). Circumscrise acelorași teme de interes, s-a demonstrat că activitatea fizică din pauzele școlare precum și scurtele activități recreative din timpul orelor determină o mai bună concentrare la lecții și crește performanțele elevilor (Barros, Sillver&Stein, 2009, *School recess and group classroom behaviour*). De aceeași susținere se bucură și activitățile extrașcolare, echilibrate ca număr, care determină creșterea performanțelor școlare (Harrison, Narayan, 2003; Fredericks, Eccles, 2006/2008). În anul 2018, World Health Organization a realizat un studiu la nivelul țărilor europene, intitulat *Situation of child and adolescent health in Europe* privind importanța pe care o acordă sistemul de învățământ educației copiilor în spiritul alimentației sănătoase și a introducerii activităților fizice în programul zilnic. La una dintre cele mai relevante întrebări pentru cercetare, și anume, dacă în România există o strategie națională privind promovarea sănătății fizice și mentale în și prin școli, țara noastră a răspuns negativ.

Cu toate acestea, o inițiativă lăudabilă în sensul evidențierii interesului pentru adoptarea unui stil de viață sănătos îl are, încă din anul 1998, organizația *Salvați Copiii România* care desfășoară programul *Educație pentru sănătate*, în București și în cele 15 orașe în care organizația prestează activități socio-educaționale. Programul este corelat cu disciplina optională *Educație pentru sănătate*, aprobată cu Ordin al Ministrului Nr.4496 / 11.08.2004, care face parte din Programul Național "Educația pentru sănătate în școală românească". Chiar dacă la apariția acestei discipline optionale, interesul pentru abordarea ei la clasă era ridicat, în prezent, presupunem că din cauza diversității optionalelor avizate, acesta a scăzut considerabil. În ultimii 27 de ani, incapacitatea conturării unei programe axate pe nevoile actuale ale elevilor care să răspundă dinamicii sociale, a scos la iveală nenumărate situații îngrijorătoare cu privire la incapacitatea elevilor de a-și însuși principii referitoare la *Educația pentru sănătate*, de a conștientiza pericolele la care sunt expuși și de a combate efectele negative ale alimentației nefaste prin asumarea unui comportament alimentar responsabil, fundamentat încă de la cele mai mici vîrste. Strategia Națională de Sănătate 2014-2020, elaborată și asumată de Ministerul Sănătății susține implementarea Educației

pentru sănătate în programa școlară, menționând în cadrul Direcțiilor Strategice faptul că solicită revizuirea/actualizarea actelor normative privind igiena școlară și actualizarea programei școlare de către Ministerul Educației Naționale pentru implementarea eficace a intervențiilor vizând promovarea sănătății și educația pentru sănătate la copiii de vîrstă școlară (Dezbateră privind *Educația pentru sănătate*- Administrația prezidențială, 2015). În anul 2019, Administrația Prezidențială a declarat susținerea necesității implementării în școli a materiei „Educație pentru sănătate”, care să cuprindă noțiuni privind alimentația sănătoasă și promovarea sportului.

Metodologie

Studiul constatativ inițiat de noi constituie o parte din etapa preexperimentală a unei cercetări acțiune care are în vedere derularea unui program care să determine îmbunătățirea stilului de viață al elevilor de vîrstă școlară mică, înscriși în clase din alternativa educațională Step by step. S-au ales subiecți din cadrul acestei alternative educaționale datorită numărului ridicat de ore petrecute la școală, a servirii mesei de prânz în incinta școlii, precum și a gustărilor. Astfel că observarea comportamentului alimentar al fiecărui elev este de eficiență ridicată. Un alt avantaj care vine să sprijine desfășurarea studiului face referire la unul dintre principiile promovate de alternativă care stabilește o legătură mai apropiată a părinților elevilor cu școala, aceștia fiind implicați activ în diverse activități. În acest sens, ne-am propus investigarea elevilor, a părinților acestora și a cadrelor didactice cu privire la dieta zilnică și activitățile fizice desfășurate de către elevi.

Am ales ca primă etapă a cercetării administrarea unui chestionar părinților elevilor care vor participa la programul propus. Scopul investigației a fost identificarea și analizarea stilului alimentar adoptat de membrii grupului țintă și a măsurii în care elevii desfășoară zilnic activități fizice.

Ca metodă de cercetare s-a utilizat ancheta pe bază de chestionar. Acesta a avut la bază instrumentul denumit *Children Nutrition Questionnaire* care a fost adaptat nevoilor de cercetare, prin introducerea unor noi itemi. Modalitatea de distribuire a fost cea prin Google Drive, părinții fiind informați cu privire la confidențialitatea răspunsurilor, dar și a neînregistrării datelor personale. Eșantionul a fost reprezentat de 307 subiecți. Am sondat opiniile părinților, în primul rând, deoarece până la vîrstă de 11 ani, copiii sunt dependenți de adulții în ceea ce privește stilul alimentar, alegerile pe care le fac cu privire la alimentație fiind destul de reduse.

Itemii construiți s-au înscris în sfera celor obiectivi, cu alegere duală, itemi semiobiectivi, cu răspuns scurt, dar și și itemi subiectivi. Aceștia au vizat aspecte legate de dieta zilnică a copiilor, de preferințele alimentare, apetența acestora spre dulciuri, consumul de apă sau alte băuturi, activitățile fizice în care sunt implicați și frecvența cu care sunt desfășurate, dar și interesul acestora față de diverse device-uri și accesul la acestea. Construcția acestora a avut la bază recomandările făcute de Organizația Mondială a Sănătății privitoare la combaterea obezității în rândul copiilor. S-au avut astfel în vedere următoarele aspecte: limitarea consumului de grăsimi, a alimentelor cu o concentrație crescută de zahăr și cu un aport energetic crescut, evitarea suplimentării alimentelor cu zahăr și grăsimi atunci când sunt preparate în casă, promovarea consumului de fructe, legume și alimente integrale, activitatea fizică moderată de 60 de minute la copii pe zi, limitarea timpului petrecut în activități sedentare, implicarea în activități sportive și joc activ (MEC, 2016, 20).

Primul item s-a încadrat în categoria celor obiectivi, părinții fiind solicitați să precizeze dacă propriul copil servește micul dejun sau nu. Datorită faptului că există studii care susțin că servirea acestuia determină creșterea capacității de concentrare a copiilor, dar și a performanțelor înregistrate la teste de evaluare, le oferă acestora energie în vederea desfășurării activităților fizice și intelectuale (Gibson 2003; Williams 2007; Gibson & Gunn

2011; Holmes *et al.* 2012), am considerat oportună formularea acestui item. Rezultatele indică un procent ridicat al celor care servesc micul dejun, conform figurii 1.

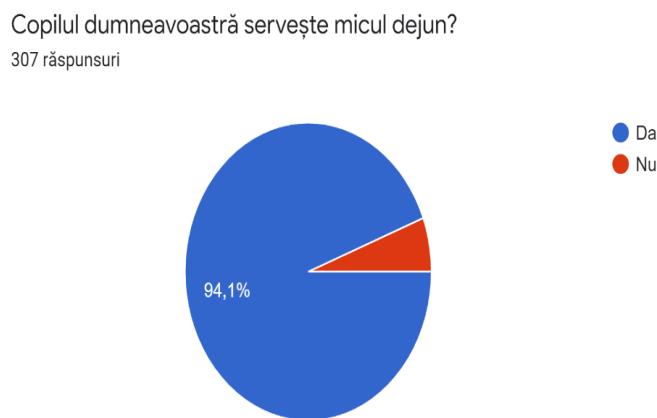


Figura 1. Răspunsuri privitoare la servirea micului dejun de către elevi

Rezultatele obținute indică interesul pe care părinții elevilor îl acordă servirii acestei mese, conștientizând totodată rolul pe care îl deține în asigurarea unui stil de viață sănătos.

Studiile privind servirea micului dejun de către elevii din România susțin că acest fapt nu este un comportament frecvent întâlnit, situând România printre țările cu cea mai mică prevalență a consumului zilnic de mic dejun, mai ales în rândul fetelor și al copiilor proveniți din familiile cu un status socio-economic scăzut. Considerăm că rezultatele obținute de noi contrazic oarecum aceste studii deoarece familiile elevilor din alternativa educațională Step by step dețin un status socio-economic de nivel mediu spre ridicat.

Al doilea item al chestionarului, privitor la pregătirea de către părinți a gustărilor pentru școală, a fost ales pentru a sesiza ce procent este reprezentat de elevii care își procură gustarea/gustările de la magazinele școlare. Este cunoscut faptul că acestea comercializează produse alimentare nesănătoase, cum ar fi: dulciurile, gustările sărate, sucurile etc.

Răspunsurile părinților au oferit rezultate oarecum așteptate, astfel că 91,9% dintre aceștia au susținut că le pregătesc elevilor gustările și doar 8,15% susțin că nu fac acest lucru. Considerăm că acesta este un aspect pozitiv pe care îl întâlnim însă, în cele mai multe cazuri, la elevii ciclului primar, la gimnaziu și liceu situația fiind diferită.

Prin itemul al treilea, s-a dorit a se identifica numărul meselor pe care copiii le au într-o zi. Conform așteptărilor, 70,5% dintre elevi servesc 3 mese pe zi, aspect considerat foarte important de către nutriționiști, 18,2% dintre aceștia au 2 mese, 7,5%, 4 mese, iar un procent scăzut, de 1,2%, 5 mese pe zi. Elevii care servesc doar 2 mese pe zi pot fi aceia care nu iau micul dejun acasă, ci servesc o gustare la școală.

Numărul gustărilor luate de copii într-o zi indică faptul că 57% dintre aceștia au 2 gustări pe parcursul unei zile, 7,9%, o gustare, iar 1,4%, 3 gustări, conform răspunsurilor părinților la itemul al patrulea.

Dat fiind faptul că, pe parcursul experienței profesionale în alternativa Step by step, am sesizat refuzul unor elevi de a servi anumite feluri de mâncăruri gătite la masa de prânz care era servită în școală, am formulat un item care să identifice procentul celor care refuză mâncarea. Astfel că am obținut următoarele rezultate: 77,5% refuză mâncarea, iar 22,5% nu au o problemă în acest sens.

Pentru a identifica frecvența acestui comportament, subiecții care au specificat că propriii copii refuză anumite alimente, au trebuit să răspundă următorului item, care a propus alegerea unei variante de răspuns dintr-o scală cu 5 trepte. Figura 2 indică aceste răspunsuri, numărul cel mai ridicat fiind al celor care refuză mâncarea uneori.

Dacă ați răspuns Da la întrebarea anterioară, specificați frecvența cu care face acest lucru.

250 de răspunsuri

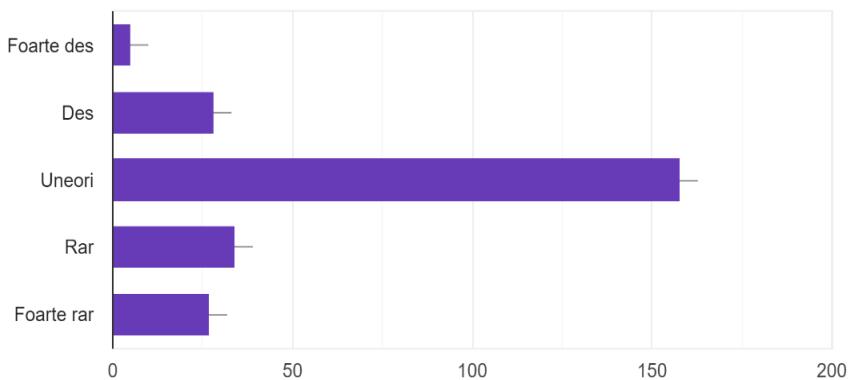


Figura 2. Frecvența refuzului unor alimente

Pe parcursul observării servirii mesei de prânz de către elevi la școală, am sesizat că cea mai mare parte a acestora refuză ciorbele/supele. Acest fapt a fost susținut și de către părinți, astfel că, 50% dintre răspunsurile oferite au indicat că aceștia nu doresc să servească acest fel de mâncare. De asemenea, refuzul cărnii gătite sub diferite forme a fost remarcat, respondenții specificând acest lucru, în proporție de 30%. Din discuțiile avute cu elevii și a răspunsurilor oferite la diverse întrebări din chestionare scrise, s-a constatat lipsa de apetență a lor față de legumele verzi. Ca urmare a investigării opiniei părinților, s-a observat că într-adevăr, acest comportament se regăsește în rândul copiilor. Mâncarea gătită este refuzată de un procent de 10 % dintre elevi, fapt cauzat probabil de lipsa de timp a părinților pentru a pregăti astfel de mâncăruri, copiii nefiind obișnuiți cu ea.

Mâncăruri pe care le refuză

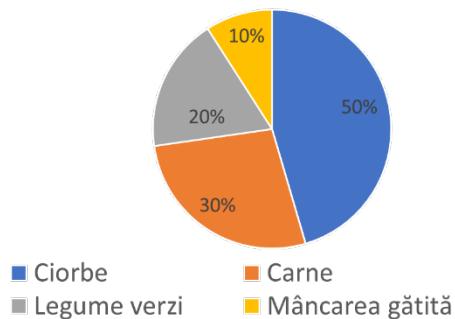


Figura 3. Mâncăruri refuzate de către elevi

„Consumul de fructe și legume în perioada copilăriei are multiple efecte benefice asupra sănătății. Acestea contribuie la o bună sănătate și creștere, la dezvoltarea intelectuală optimă, la un nivel scăzut al indicelui de masă corporală și la o creștere a densității osoase la băieți” (Blanchette, Brug, 2005, 433). De aceea, itemul următor a avut în vedere acest aspect. Astfel s-a sesizat un aspect pozitiv legat de consumul de fructe și legume, și anume că 96,7% dintre elevi consumă fructe și legume, în timp ce 3,3%, nu fac acest lucru. Fructele și legumele preferate de către copii sunt bananele, merele, cireșele, strugurii, caisele, pepenele roșu, fructe dulci, iar în categoria legumelor s-au regăsit morcovii și cartofii. Conform studiilor

realizate de Organizația Mondială a Sănătății, HBSC, consumul de fructe și legume descrește odată cu vârsta, de aceea rezultatele obținute în acest caz sunt foarte mulțumitoare. De asemenea, „consumul de fructe și legume în timpul copilăriei se reflectă asupra stării de sănătate a viitorului adult, prin scăderea riscului de boală coronariană, de infarct și de cancer. Consumul acestora poate fi îmbunătățit prin creșterea disponibilității fructelor și a legumelor acasă și promovarea consumului în rândul părinților, furnizarea de fructe și legume în școli și crearea de activități școlare în grădina școlii. Înlocuirea gustărilor nesănătoase și a alimentelor hipercalorice cu fructe și legume contribuie la prevenirea și tratamentul obezității, mai ales că forma și culoarea acestora poate stimula consumul prin inițierea intervențiilor adecvate (MEC, 2016, 13)“.

Itemul 9 a investigat preferința elevilor față de anumite tipuri de băuturi. Astfel, conform figurii 4, s-a constatat un procent ridicat de elevi care preferă apă, iar sucurile naturale, ceaiurile, laptele și sucurile carbogazoase, au înregistrat procente mai scăzute. Încurajarea consumului zilnic a unei cantități de apă prin intermediul mass-media poate să fie un factor care a determinat adoptarea acestui comportament alimentar.

Beneficiile consumului de apă sunt recunoscute în cazul copiilor, făcându-se referire la creșterea performanțelor școlare, susținerea activităților fizice și sportive și dezvoltarea fizică armonioasă.

Consumul de sucuri de fructe, dar și de băuturi carbogazoase poate determina creșterea în greutate a copiilor, de aceea un astfel de comportament alimentar nu ar trebui încurajat de către părinți, aspect cunoscut de către părinții investigați, date fiind rezultatele obținute. Consumul scăzut de lapte este un aspect care poate deveni problematic, date fiind beneficiile pe care acesta le are asupra menținerii stării de sănătate a elevilor (proteine, calciu, potasiu, vitamina D, vitamina B12. Academia Americană de Pediatrie recomandă servirea a 2 căni cu lapte pe zi. În România, copiii servesc lapte, în special cu cereale, la micul dejun, sau un pahar cu lapte, seara. Programul național *Cornul și laptele*, implementat în școlile de la noi din țară, nu se bucură de un foarte mare succes, elevii consumându-le în proporții reduse.

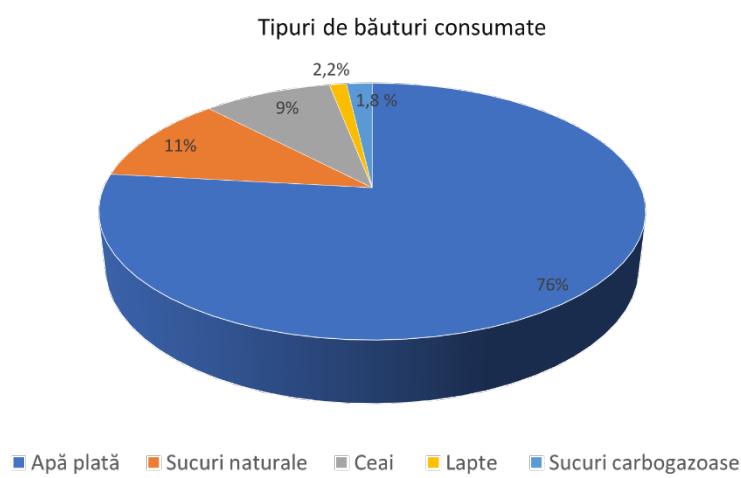


Figura 4. Tipuri de băuturi consumate

Consumul de dulciuri a fost investigat prin itemul următor, astfel s-a constatat că există un interes sporit al elevilor față de acestea. 48,9% consumă dulciuri destul de des, 27,4%, rar, 20,2%, des, 2,9% foarte des, 1,3% foarte rar, conform figurii 5.

Cât de des consumă copilul dvs. dulciuri?

307 răspunsuri

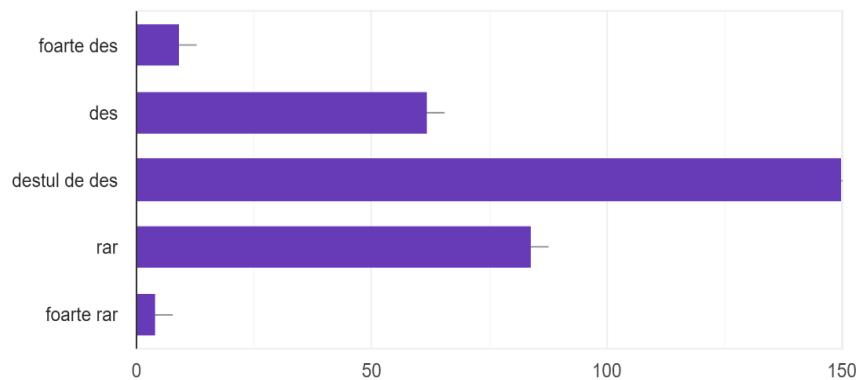


Figura 5. Frecvența consumului de dulciuri

Nutriționiștii atrag atenția cu privire la legăturile consumului ridicat de zahăr cu apariția diabetului la copii, a obezității și inclusiv, creșterea tensiunii arteriale. De obicei, consumul de alimente dulci este condiționat de nivelul de educație al părinților, sau de cunoștințele pe care aceștia le dețin cu privire la acest subiect.

Un caz aparte îl constituie recompensarea copiilor cu dulciuri ca urmare a practicării unor comportamente pozitive, fapt care determină creșterea apetenței pentru dulciuri. Un studiu realizat în anul 1970 de către cercetători britanici, arată că există corelații între oferirea de către părinți a unei bomboane ca recompensă și apariția unor comportamente violente la copii în viitor. Cu toate acestea, se consideră că este nevoie de mai multe studii care să ateste acest fapt.

Un alt aspect important legat de stilul de viață al elevilor, este cel cu privire la utilizarea device-urilor în activitățile zilnice. Studiile susțin că acestea au un impact negativ asupra dezvoltării, dar și a stării de bine a elevilor. Elevii pot avea dificultăți de învățare, pot deveni mai agresivi, pot avea probleme de integrare socială sau anxietate care pot conduce spre elemente de depresie. Din aceste motive, au fost introduse itemi care să identifice aceste aspecte. În primul rând, s-a identificat faptul că numărul de ore petrecut de către elevi pe aceste dispozitive este destul de ridicat. Rezultatele din figura 6 arată că 2-3 ore pe zi sunt alocate acestei activități de către 74,6% dintre elevi, o oră de către 15,1%, iar 3 ore de către 10,3%. Data fiind situația actuală, considerăm că perioada este una ridicată și din cauza activităților școlare în regim online.

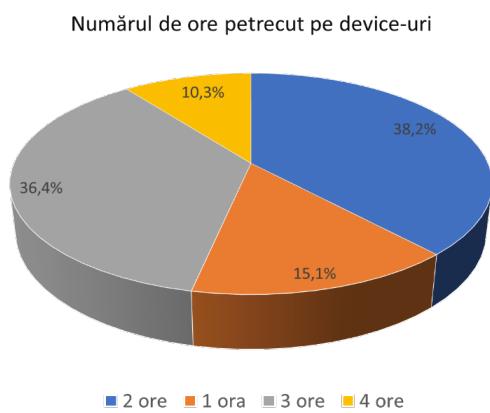


Figura 6. Numărul de ore petrecut pe device-uri

Cu toate acestea, numărul de ore petrecut în fața calculatorului sau a smartphone-ului, respectiv a tabletei, ar trebui redus considerabil, tocmai pentru a fi evitată apariția efectelor enumerate anterior. Recomandările actuale susțin faptul că timpul petrecut de un copil la televizor sau calculator nu ar trebui să fie mai mare de 1-2 ore pe zi.

Privitor la deținerea unui device în propria cameră, care să faciliteze accesul la internet, s-au obținut următoarele date: din totalul de 307 răspunsuri, 68,7% au declarat că dețin un astfel de device, iar 31,3% au declarat că nu.

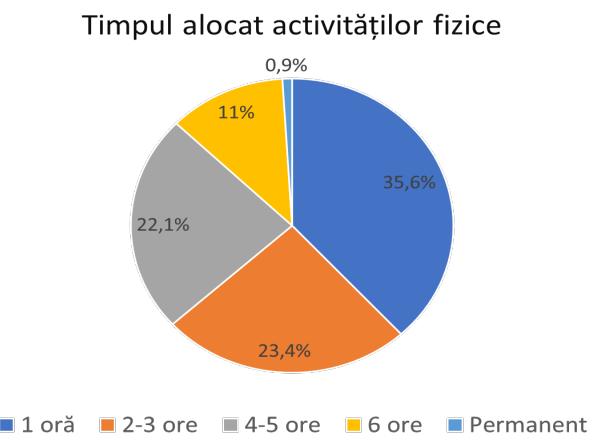


Figura 7.Timpul alocat activităților fizice

Datorită importanței pe care o au activitățile fizice în asigurarea unui stil de viață sănătos, am dorit să identificăm timpul alocat acestora, în programul zilnic al unui elev. Astfel, s-a sesizat că 35,6% sunt activi fizic o oră pe parcursul unei zile, 23,4% alocă 2-3 ore acestor activități, 22,1% sunt activi 4-5 ore pe zi, 11% dedică 6 ore activităților fizice, iar 0,9% se încadrează în categoria celor care sunt activi permanent, conform răspunsurilor părinților. Aceste rezultate sunt mulțumitoare, deoarece se remarcă inexistența elevilor care să nu aibă activități fizice într-o zi. Acest lucru este datorat și vârstei elevilor, cunoscut fiind faptul că la vârsta școlară mică, elevii sunt activi din punct de vedere fizic prin prisma jocurilor, a întrecerilor sportive pe care le organizează în școală și în afara ei, a activităților extrașcolare în care sunt implicați etc.

În ceea ce privește preferințele elevilor pentru activitățile fizice, pe primele locuri se regăsesc următoarele: mersul pe bicicletă, fotbalul, alergarea, înnotul, gimnastica. Din păcate, jocul apare pe ultimul loc în ierarhia acestora, dovedindu-se astfel timpul redus pe care copiii îl mai petrec cu această activitate. Considerăm că în acest sens, părinții ar trebui informați cu privire la beneficiile pe care le are acesta asupra dezvoltării copiilor, cu scopul de a crea momente în care să includă jocul structurat, dar și pe cel liber în activitățile zilnice ale copiilor. Astfel că jocul:

- creează buna dispoziție;
- determină flexibilitatea emoțională;
- dezvoltă calmul, reziliența, capacitatea de adaptare și abilitatea de a face față schimbărilor și evenimentelor neașteptate;
- promovează colaborarea și cooperarea;
- cultivă perseverența și concentrarea;
- determină autodisciplinarea;
- reduce anxietatea;
- permite copilului să greșească; învățând din greșeli, prin joc, nu vor simți presiunea pierderii;
- promovează compasiunea;
- dezvoltă capacitatea de a face alegeri;

- formează abilități de planificare și organizare a unei activități;
- modeleză relațiile bazate pe încredere;
- reduce obosela și stresul;
- dezvoltă agilitatea, coordonarea și flexibilitatea.
- Emoțiile pozitive apărute în timpul jocului determină sănătatea sistemului imunitar, a celui endocrin și a celui cardiovascular.
- Conform *American Academy of Pediatricians* (Yogman, M., Garner, A., Hutchinson, J., Hirsh-Pasek, K., Michnick Golinkoff, R, 2018) jocul liber îl determină pe copil să se delecteze, ceea ce indică importanța acestuia în crearea stării de bine.

Pentru a identifica măsura în care părinții sunt mulțumiți de frecvența activităților fizice și a sportului organizate în cadrul programului școlar zilnic, am conceput următorul item. Astfel că, un procent de 61,8% consideră că este alocat suficient timp activităților fizice și sportului, iar 38,2% susțin că nu este suficient.

În ceea ce ne privește, considerăm că activitățile de educație fizică, respectiv, joc și mișcare ar trebui să se deruleze în fiecare zi, cu maximă responsabilitate din partea profesorilor și maximă implicare a elevilor.

„Comisia Europeană sprijină o rețea pentru Activitățile Fizice de Îmbunătățire a Sănătății (HEPA) la nivelul UE, care subliniază faptul că activitatea fizică este plăcută și benefică atunci când:

- se desfășoară zilnic;
- durează minim 60 de minute/zi, săptămânal;
- este diversă și distractivă;
- are intensitate moderată;
- se desfășoară acasă, la școală, în timpul liber, în vacanțe;
- se efectuează cu familia, colegi, prieteni sau individual;
- se desfășoară în sală sau în aer liber;
- se desfășoară sub formă de joc, joc sportiv, diverse sporturi;
- devine un obicei pentru toată viața” (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/diseases-prevention/physical-activity/activities/hepa-europe>).

Ultimul item a vizat acordul sau dezacordul părinților cu privire la implicarea elevilor într-un program de educație pentru sănătate organizat la nivelul școlii. Conform figurii 8, răspunsurile oferite sunt următoarele: 67,1% dintre respondenți și-au exprimat acordul alegând scorul 5, 17,9% au ales scorul 4, 12,7% au ales scorul 3, 2% au ales scorul 2, iar 1% au ales scorul 1, ultimele două alegeri indicând dezacordul față de această inițiativă.

Pe o scală de la 1 la 5, unde 1 înseamnă dezacord total, iar 5 acord total, exprimați-vă opinia privitoare la necesitatea implicării copilului dvs. în... educație pentru sănătate organizat la nivelul școlii.

307 răspunsuri

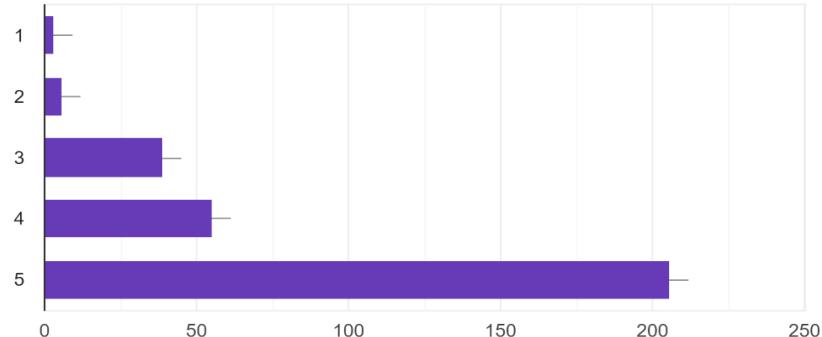


Figura 8. Exprimarea acordului sau a dezacordului cu privire la derularea unui program de educație pentru sănătate în școală

În vederea realizării unui studiu calitativ, ne propunem derularea unui astfel de program, cu teme circumscrise alimentației sănătoase, activităților fizice, dar și a celor de dezvoltare personală.

Concluzii

Studiul cantitativ desfășurat a oferit date importante privitoare la stilul de viață al elevilor de vîrstă școlară mică, din alternativa educațională Step by step, percepță prin prisma opiniilor părinților. Considerăm că acestea sunt relevante pentru cercetarea noastră deoarece, la această vîrstă, din acest punct de vedere, copiii sunt dependenți de adulți. În foarte puține situații, ei sunt lăsați să aleagă ceea ce doresc să mânânce și care dintre mese să fie servite, exceptie făcând cazurile în care copiii refuză acest lucru. Răspunsurile oferite de subiecții chestionați constituie resurse de valoare în vederea derulării programului de intervenție amintit anterior. De asemenea, chiar dacă numărul respondenților a fost unul mulțumitor, aceștia exprimându-și opiniile în mod obiectiv, ne dorim o creștere semnificativă a eșantionului de respondenți în vederea generalizării rezultatelor. De asemenea, fiind o temă de interes ridicat și de mare actualitate, ar fi eficientă extinderea studiului la nivel național.

Ca limite ale studiului nostru care ne determină să nu putem generaliza datele obținute, putem specifica numărul respondenților și, probabil, subiectivitatea răspunsurilor părinților cu scopul de a le oferi pe cele așteptate de către cercetător.

Pentru asigurarea validității răspunsurilor oferite de părinți, avem în vedere utilizarea altor instrumente, sub formă de chestionar sau grilă de autoanaliză pe care să le administram elevilor, și, în același timp, cadrelor didactice de la clasele respective. După obținerea acestor date, ne propunem să proiectăm un program de formare a cadrelor didactice privind educația pentru sănătate a elevilor din ciclul primar care să fie acreditat de Ministerul Educației Naționale. La nivelul părinților și al elevilor, dorim implicarea acestora în programul amintit, în care să beneficieze și de consiliere nutrițională din partea specialiștilor în nutriție.

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THE IMPACT OF EXPERIENTIAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES ON THE TASK ORIENTATION OF PRESCHOOLERS AGED 5-6

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Abstract. *Outdoor education is a concept that is beginning to make its way into the Romanian education system. Being outside in nature is a need of people of all ages, and involvement in outdoor activities is a need and a desire of children. Outdoor education familiarizes preschoolers with the environment, stimulates curiosity about the environment, increases the level of active involvement of preschoolers, responds to their interests, capitalizing on their creativity. Outdoor activities have a varied, attractive, motivating and interesting character, supporting the applicability of knowledge and promoting interdisciplinarity. Due to the way of carrying out the activities and their specificity, outdoor education contributes to the well-being of preschoolers. Outside our country, the formative values of outdoor education are well-known, this being part of the daily program of children and students. In the Romanian preschool education system, the natural space of the kindergarten is capitalized, but mostly for the development of games and recreational activities. Because the state's preschool education system does not capitalize on the maximum potential of outdoor education, we wanted to implement a program of experiential outdoor activities in several preschool units, at preschoolers aged 5-6, during a school year. The proposed outdoor activities were largely interdisciplinary, focusing on the experiential areas with which the Curriculum for preschool education (2008) and the Curriculum for early education (2019) operate. Through the study, we aimed to study the impact of this system, of experiential outdoor activities on the performance of preschoolers aged 5-6 in general, and work orientation, in particular. In order to measure this variable, we used as a research tool the Teacher-Child Rating Scale (T-CRS) 2.1, the scale Task Orientation. 4 preschool education units from Cluj and Sălaj counties, Romania, were involved in this study, with the participation of 104 preschoolers.*

Keywords: outdoor education, task orientation, experiential, preschoolers

Introduction

The study conducted by us aims at the influence of a program of experiential outdoor activities on the performance of children aged 5 to 6. Why outdoor education? We chose this topic because this type of education is not capitalized in the preschool education system, but abroad it is part of the daily program of preschoolers, its advantages being well known. Outdoor education has many benefits for people of all ages, especially for preschoolers, who fully enjoy every opportunity to be in nature. The reasons for choosing preschoolers aged 5-6 as the target group are the following:

- at the age of 5, the preschooler is aware of the possibility of carrying out organized outdoor activities, carried out at the group level, which are not limited to free play and are actively involved in their implementation;
- the high interest of preschoolers in activities as diverse and complex as possible and the openness to outdoor activities;
- the importance of forming and developing a desirable relationship between preschooler and nature;
- preschoolers aged 5-6 are independent, have developed basic skills and do not need much help;
- the large number of children in a group, regardless of level (\pm 30 preschoolers - in the state education system, which is contrary to the National Education Law No. 1/2011, art. 63, paragraph (1), letter b), which states that a group in pre-school education must work with about 15 children - no less than 10 and no more than 20, which implies a high difficulty in organizing outdoor activities with preschoolers aged 3-4 or 4-5 (children in these groups needing help in almost any action taken);
- lack/ insufficiency of care staff in relation to the number of groups and preschoolers (which means that the educator does not receive help / benefits to a small extent - insufficient - in the activity carried out in the group; and from this point of view engaging preschoolers aged 3-4 or 4-5 in outdoor activities proves to be extremely difficult).

Over time, many ambiguities have emerged regarding the definition of the concept of outdoor education, which is defined both from a psycho-social and an environmental point of view. Starting from the meanings offered by specialists over the years for outdoor education, Câmpan and Bocoș (2020) defined outdoor activities as learning activities that take place outdoors and which involve practical learning experiences, which aim at training and developing participant's skills, as well as acquiring knowledge and applying them, capitalizing on the resources of the natural environment.

Outdoor activities facilitate the learning process, increase the motivation and degree of active participation, capitalize on children's experiences, develop creativity, change the attitude of learners towards learning, learning activities are more attractive, aiming at developing strategies. Due to their specificity, these activities provide well-being to the participants, offering joys and satisfactions in learning.

Four preschool education units from Cluj and Sălaj counties, state and private, were involved in the research, with a total of 104 large preschoolers registered. The intervention program, proposed and carried out by us, took place over a period of one school year, carrying out a weekly outdoor activity. The sample of content capitalized in the realization of the formative experiment targeted experiential activities of outdoor type, focused on the experiential fields with which the Curriculum for preschool education operates (2008) and, starting with the 2019-2020 school year, the Curriculum for Early Education (2019).

In planning the activities, the following were taken into account:

- observing the theme of the seasons and capitalizing on specific natural resources;
- valuing the holidays during the year (for example, Christmas);
- achieving conformity between the proposed activity and the experiential field on which it focuses;
- capitalizing on the topic with a focus on different experiential fields; because outdoor movement games (specific to the Psychomotor Domain) are more common, we tried to capitalize on the other experiential areas;

- the recommendations of specialists and teachers involved in research; to this end, the planning was carried out monthly, thereby making possible to optimize activities systematically;
- respecting the age peculiarities of preschoolers;
- capitalizing on the children's desire to know, developing their curiosity and interest;
- raising children's awareness about environmental protection.

By approaching this research issue, we wanted to highlight the impact of experiential activities such as the school performance of preschoolers, focusing on task orientation. In our opinion, the realization of experiential activities in the open air aims at learning in a practical way, offering, due to their specificity, the possibility of active involvement of all children to a greater extent. The activities are different from those that preschoolers are familiar with, and the venue becomes a huge field of challenges.

The results obtained from the research organized and carried out by us, are addressed to teachers in preschool education, dedicated to this profession and who want to add value both in the training and development of preschoolers and in the preschool education system.

Methodology

Research Questions

The research questions that formed the basis of our research are:

What is the influence of outdoor experiential activities on the task orientation of preschoolers aged 5-6?

Does the participation of preschoolers aged 5-6 in experiential outdoor activities determine the optimization of the task orientation?

The purpose of this research is to study the impact of organizing experiential outdoor activities on the task orientation of preschoolers aged 5-6.

Research hypothesis

Our practical-applied research had as a benchmark the hypothesis according to which *the application, to the large group, of a system of experiential outdoor activities leads to the optimization of the task orientation for pre-schoolers aged 5-6.*

Research variables

The research variables are:

Independent variable:

- the organization and development by the teacher for preschool education, of a system of experiential outdoor activities, in compliance with the curriculum for preschool education;

Dependent variable:

- task orientation.

Research methods

The research method we used in our research is observation, having as research tool the Teacher-Child Rating Scale 2.1 (T-CRS 2.1). This research tool includes 4 subscales (Task Orientation, Behavior Control, Assertiveness and Peer Social Skills), presenting in this study the results obtained after applying the Task Orientation subscale.

Results

Variable	Stage	M	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
task orientation	pre-test	28.88	104	6.73	.66
	post-test	32.66	104	5.63	.55

Table 1. Comparative analysis of the variable „task orientation”, in the pre-test and post-test stages

Analyzing Table 01, we find that in the pre-test the mean obtained at the level of task orientation is slightly low ($M=28.88$), noting optimizations in the post-test stage, where $M=32.66$, as we can see in Table 02 and in Figure 01.

Variable	Pre-test		Post-test		N	95% CI	r	t	df
	M	Std. Deviation	M	Std. Deviation					
task orientation	28.88	6.73	32.66	5.63	104	[-4.47; -3.08]	.84	10.76*	103

Note: * $p<0.001$

Table 2. Paired Samples t test

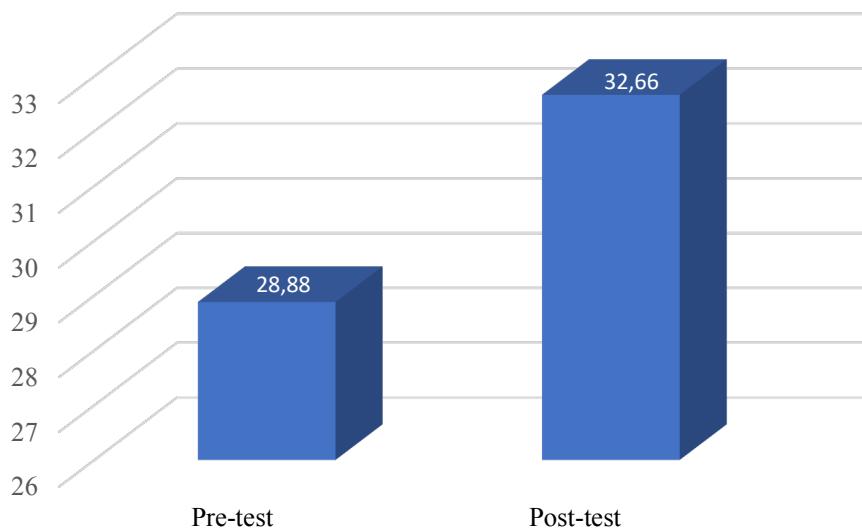


Figure 1. Graphical representation of variable means „task orientation”, in the pre-test and post-test stages

Following the calculation of the Paired Samples t test (see Table 02), a $t_{(103)}= 10.76$, $p=0.00$, was obtained for task orientation. Because t is significant, it results that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test stages.

Calculating the effect size, a $d=1.05$ was obtained, which means, according to Cohen's (1988) criteria, that our intervention program had a strong effect on the task orientation of children aged 5 to 6.

In conclusion, the hypothesis of our research, *the application, to the large group, of a system of experiential outdoor activities leads to the optimization of the task orientation for preschoolers aged 5-6*, is confirmed.

Conclusion

Through our study, we showed that the outdoor activities carried out with preschoolers aged 5-6 help to increase the degree of task orientation, that is why we support the development of this type of activities in a systematic way. We are convinced that the imagination, creativity,

virtuosity, experience and opening to the new of teachers can lead to the planning, organization and development of successful outdoor activities, with a strong positive impact on children.

A limitation of this research is represented by the small number of study participants, preschoolers. We also consider that the involvement of parents, in conducting research, would be an advantage, because it would help them realize the importance of creating a desirable relationship between the child and the environment, by participating in outdoor activities. In addition, we want to create a program aimed at the personal and social development of preschoolers, as well as optimizing their performance, based on experiential outdoor activities and to propose directions for action for the efficient implementation of outdoor experiential activities, in the context of the curriculum for early education.

We also want to expand the program of outdoor activities to other levels of education, to study the impact of this type of activity on students of different ages, but also to study the impact on other skills of learners. Moreover, we consider that the existence of an optional outdoor education would be a real help. In our opinion, the possible outdoor activity hours (conducted as an option), to go outdoors (regardless of the level of education chosen), can be an opportunity to bring the child closer to everything that school means. Detaching from the daily routine and yet supporting the learning process (through the active involvement of the child) is done effectively through outdoor activities, offering the possibility to achieve a closer emotional connection between the educable and the school environment, as well, between the educable and the environment.

In other words, our advocacy is for the more accentuated capitalization of the idea of outdoor education in the Romanian curricular culture, being in line with its axiological lines: a) focusing the educational process on the formation of capacities, competencies and attitudes; b) focusing the educational act on the student and on the learning process activity; c) adopting an inter and transdisciplinary vision in building the school curriculum; d) the possibility of achieving differentiated and individualized school and educational paths; e) approaching the curriculum in close correlation with the issue of didactic evaluation (Bocoş & Chiş, 2013).

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INCREASING SELF-CONFIDENCE IN STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES THROUGH EXERCISES IN BODY TECHNIQUE AND DANCE THERAPY

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Abstract: Objectives of this article refer to ways to increase self-confidence in students, from different universities in Transylvania, manifested by the values of self-depreciation, infatuation and self-esteem. These are realized through the use of complex exercises on music in the form of dance-therapy and body technique.

Purpose: elaboration of an action strategy to modify the self-depreciation, self-esteem, infatuation.

Hypothesis: by introducing the exercises of body technique and dance-therapy, the aim is to modify the components of the ASSI psychological test: self-depreciation, infatuation and self-esteem.

Material and Methods: statistical processing was performed with the program StatsDirect v.2.7.2. The graphical representation of the results was done with the Excel application (from the Microsoft Office 2010 package). The tests used are: ASSI and an intervention program based on exercises in body technique and dance therapy.

The subjects participating in the experiment, with a duration of 6 months, are 200 students of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, also the extension from Baia-Mare, and from the Academy of Music "Gheorghe Dima" of Cluj-Napoca.

The period of development was between October 2019 and March 2020.

The results of this study are due to the intervention program, through exercises in body technique and dance therapy performed by the experimental group compared to the control group. In the case of A-SN, it is a good correlation, but of the opposite direction, which means that if (A) self-depreciation decreases then (SN) self-esteem increases. In the case of I-SN, it is an acceptable correlation and of the same meaning, which means that if (I) the infatuation increases and (SN) the self-esteem increases, were observed statistically significantly significant differences between the two times ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusions: Statistically significant differences were observed in the indicators of the ASSI tests (self-depreciation, self-esteem, infatuation) which indicates, that our intervention program in the preliminary study had a positive and measurable impact on students, in terms of improving self-depreciation and infatuation, as well as increasing self-esteem.

Keywords: Dance-therapy, body technique, self-depreciation, self-esteem, infatuation.

Introduction

Numerous studies of students show positive changes in their behavior. Italian researchers have investigated the role of dance in the educational process. Because dance reflects either the physical and mental aspect, or the emotional and cognitive one, it can teach children to discover their still untapped potential, raising their self-awareness. In addition, the flexibility that dance brings, allows the connection primarily with music, but also with other disciplines thus, facilitating their connection and contributing to the achievement of a global vision of knowledge (Candela et al., 2013).

An educational program structured over 16 weeks, combined with dance therapy, seems to have a positive effect on the quality of life of obese people (Allet et al., 2017). Dance is more than a therapy, it can offer more than therapeutic benefits, the researchers reached this conclusion by analyzing Parkinson's disease and applying therapeutic dance to patients (Rocha et al., 2017). Students who practiced dance reported significantly greater physical, cognitive, and social benefits than novice dancers. They also showed signs of improving their mood. Traditional Scottish dance can have the effect of delaying the signs of aging functional abilities in women, and simple physical activity can help maintain a correct posture. In both groups the balance and body composition remained the same (Dewhurst et al., 2014).

The practice of dance activates both motor and sensory circuits. Therefore, when an individual dances, the brain is stimulated by both the sound of music and dance movements. PET scanning showed regions of the brain that become activated during dance learning, including the motor cortex, somatosensory cortex, and cerebellum (Duberg, 2012). The benefits of dancing on the brain include improved memory and neural connections. In Giovagnoli's study (2013), entitled Complementary Therapies in Medicine, the effects of active music therapy (AMT), in knowledge and behavior in chronic vascular encephalopathy, are described. Cognitive performance, mood, interpersonal interaction and perceived abilities were assessed using neuro-psychological and psycho-behavioral measurements. After AMT, the cognitive profile was improved in attention, visuomotor coordination, and verbal and spatial memory. These positive changes were confirmed after 3 months. An increase in interpersonal interaction and consistent reductions in anxiety were also observed (Giovagnoli et al., 2013). In Hackett's article (2013), we find that music therapy provides conditions that can intentionally stimulate communication and increase opportunities for social interaction.

Dance therapy (DT) is the psychotherapeutic use of movement and dance for intellectual, emotional and motor support of the body (Ekman et al., 1998). As a way of creative artistic therapies, DT aims at the correlation between movement and emotions (Schore, 1994). Self-esteem gathers the dimensions of self-confidence and self-esteem. There is also talk of involving self-acceptance in the formation of self-esteem. The aspect of self-esteem aims at two directions: the opinion or feedback of others (extrinsic dimension) and the feeling of ability, competence in achieving goals or solving problems by the individual to accomplish tasks - intrinsic dimension Humphreys (2006).

The Self - Adams and Berzonsky (2009) define the self as an important component of the personality, that is analyzed by several disciplines (psychology, sociology), and involves a range of associated concepts such as self-identity, self-image, self-concept, consciousness, self and self-concern (Adams & Berzonsky, 2009). The self can be defined as a multitude of beliefs and images about our own person. Taylor et al. (2001) proved that the image we create about ourselves is a deep part of our personality and means reflexivity, this image is neither superficial nor changeable. The social dimensions of the self are described as follows: the concept of self includes psychic, physical features, is a mental schema, central to self, its identity or essence, is the way we categorize our external behaviors and internal states, intimate thoughts being valued socially (Taylor et al., 1994, as cited in Ilut, 2001). The self has got two basic dimensions: the self-the existential self, the subjective component of the self, which provides a sense of awareness and identity of one's own existence and self-based on

objective data that circumscribe physical data, cognitive abilities and personality traits (James, 1980).

The objectives of this research refer to ways to increase self-confidence in students from different universities in Transylvania, manifested by the values of self-depreciation, infatuation and self-esteem. These are realized through the use of complex exercises on music in the form of dance-therapy and body technique. Applying artistic techniques improves students' results and optimizes their behavior. By applying systems of specific means, the aim is to change the dysfunctional negative emotions before and after the dance: stress, anxiety, sadness, guilt. Positive emotions such as self-confidence and self-esteem increase. Knowing the multiple therapies that help to achieve human physical and mental well-being, we chose the intervention through dance as a method to help reduce stress and improve school results for young people aged 19-25. Therefore, we proposed an action system, an intervention plan that can be applied during physical education and sports classes, using the specific means of dance.

The purpose-elaboration of an action strategy to modify the self-depreciation, self-esteem, infatuation:

We propose the elaboration of an action strategy for the reduction of stress through different artistic techniques, and the evaluation of the efficiency of the applied research methods. At the same time, we should determine the opportunity and efficiency of practicing dance in students aged 19-25 to improve self-confidence, self-esteem, as well as decrease self-depreciation and infatuation.

The main objectives take into consideration the well-being of young people, more precisely we consider lowering the stress level by applying intervention plans based on a sequence of specific steps in contemporary ballet, classical dance, but, also, elements carefully picked from rhythmic gymnastics and artistic gymnastics. Self-esteem is defined as a dimension that is constantly changing. It is related to the perception of one's own characteristics that shape one's own self. In his conception, each one has a basis about his value, about what situation he has to overcome or what situation he has to face (Tom, 2005). In a broad sense, an applied sense of self-esteem implies the essential condition of dealing with crises and paranormal and normative problems without being discouraged (Humphreys, 2007). In 1961, the psychologist Goffman (1961) said that the self has got two components: self-image - picture of the self-containing specific data about a person such as physical appearance, experiences and preferences and self-esteem - evaluative components: axiological evaluation and internalized social judgments of one's personality traits (Adams & Berzonsky, 2009). Today we can list a few concepts used and recognized: self-efficacy, self-perception, self-regulation or self-control, self-monitoring of the individual, self-strengthening, self-improvement, self-realization (Chelcea, 2006).

Hypothesis: by introducing the exercises of body technique and dance-therapy, the aim is to modify the components of the ASSI psychological test: self-depreciation, infatuation and self-esteem. It is assumed that different indicators of stress (anxiety, emotional distress, self-regulation, etc.) are dependent (modifiable) variables, which can be improved by applying an independent variable, as, in our case, the dance program.

The subjects, period of time and place: the subjects participating in the experiment, with a duration of 6 months, by 200 students of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, and the extension from Baia-Mare and from the Music Academy "Gheorghe Dima" of Cluj-Napoca. The development of experiment was taken between October 2019 and March 2020.

Organization of the research: in this phase of our research, we applied ways to reduce stress and dedicated tools. We have started to implement the intervention plan. The two groups (control and experimental) were tested at an interval of 6 months (initial testing and final testing).

Lot I (control) of 100 students, did not benefit from dancing, but only from the actual physical education and sports classes, and were tested in the two moments of registration (initial phase and final phase), with the same devices used in the case of the experimental group. Both batches were tested with the tests: ASSI (Self-Esteem). Lot II, (experimental) benefited from physical education classes through specific dance steps, specially composed. In general, experimental research is the verification of the hypothesis. Participants from both groups were tested in the same time frame.

Material and Methods: statistical processing was performed with the program StatsDirect v.2.7.2. The graphical representation of the results was done with the Excel application (from the Microsoft Office 2010 package). The tests used were: ASSI and an intervention program based on exercises in body technique and dance therapy. ASSI questionnaire (Self-depreciation, Self-esteem, Infatuation). The ASSI questionnaire is a standardized test for assessing self-esteem as an individual trait. This test targets both "normal" self-esteem (with lower or higher values) and the accentuated poles of this dimension: self-depreciation and infatuation.

Self-esteem renders the most evaluative component of the human self, and represents the emotional experience, the emotions that a person experiences when referring to his own person (Constantin, 2004). Self-esteem is an assessment that is made by us. The evaluation that a person considers having is the degree of self-satisfaction (Harter, 1998). Rosenberg (1979), in his work, differentiates positive or high self-esteem from negative or low self-esteem, and defines it as a complex emotional and cognitive synthesis.

Owens (1993) defined two new components of self-esteem, namely: self-confidence and self-depreciation. Normal self-esteem is defined by an individual who self-evaluates closer to one of the two poles, namely: low self-esteem or high self-esteem.

Music therapy means the use of music to improve health or functional outcomes. It is a creative artistic therapy, which consists of a process in which a therapist uses all the physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic and spiritual facets to help clients improve their physical and mental health, especially cognitive functioning, motor skills, emotional development, communication, sensors and social skills and quality of life, using both active and receptive musical experiences such as improvisation, composition and discussion of music. Approaches used in music therapy that appeared from the field of music education include Orff-Schulwerk, Dalcroze eurythmy and the Kodaly method. Models that have developed directly from music therapy are neurological music therapy (NMT), Nordoff-Robins music therapy and the Bonny method - images and guided music (Davis et al., 2008).

Relaxation through colors and free movements (<http://www.tarshi.net/inplainspeak/author/arpita-bohra/>). These intervention programs consist of a succession of movements involving balance and arching exercises as well as models of body wave structures.

Musical composition by Nikos Ignatiadis, "Triumph", in slow tempo (12x8) Timpi. I noted 12x8 for technical reasons, but the exercises, each one will be performed at least 4x8 on the main directions, repeating laterally 2 times. On the occasion of the exercises, the emphasis was on the correct position of the body and head, on the correct posture of the arms and the transition of the body from one position to another correctly.

8-stroke structures are randomly linked to develop creativity in students.

(1x8) 1-2. Movement with the displacement of the center of gravity type "Side body wave" completed in sitting on the heel 3-4. Standing, bend on the left leg with the left arm obliquely up and the right arm obliquely down, 5-6. Weight shift on both legs with knees bent at the same time as the large torso bends forward, with the back rounded and the head flexed. 7. Lateral flexion on the right leg with the right arm obliquely up and the left arm obliquely downwards, 8. Unbalance forward, "body wave" type forward.

(2x8) 1-4. Moving the weight of the body from one leg to the other forward, such as the "Temps - lie" movement with the arms raised forward, with the arms bent and looking behind the arms. 5-8. Moving the weight from one leg to the other backwards, type "Temps - lie" backwards with the lowering of the arms bent backwards downwards.

(3x8) In pairs: 1-4. Moving the weight of the body from one leg to the other type "Temps - lie" sideways to the right with the swinging of the arms bent in the frontal plane to the right. 5-8. Moving body weight from one leg to the other to the left, type Temps - lie lateral left with swinging the arms bent in the front to the left.



Fig.1. Balance movements in pairs



Fig.2. Exercises in pairs

(4x8) 1-2. Turn left with successive steps 360 degrees with arms folded up and 2 claps: 3-4. Turn to the right with successive steps 360 degrees with arms up and 2 claps: 5-6. Maintaining static balance with the right leg bent, supported on the tip, with the arms close to the body. 7-8. Maintaining static balance with the left leg bent, supported on the tip and with the arms close to the body.



Fig.3. Maintaining the balance



Fig.4. Static balance with bent leg

(5x8) 1-4, 2 right turns of the chains with the raising of the arms bent upwards. 5-8, 2 chained turns, chain type to the right with the arms raised bent up.

(6x8) 1-4 "Body Wave" movement forward, with lower limbs bent with arms bent up, 5-8. "Body wave" type forward movement with finishing on the tips with the arms bent back and the knees bent.

(7x8) rhythmic clapping, touching a colleague on the right and then on the left.

(8x8) 1-4. Step with the right foot sideways to the right, step with the right foot and fix a balance position on the right foot with the left foot raised back, bent. 5-8. Step with the left foot sideways to the left, fixing a balanced position on the left foot with the right foot raised back, bent.

In the pilot study, these models of structures were chosen randomly and repeated by the experiment group 3 times, both at the beginning of physical education classes, after warm-up and at the end of physical education classes, in the last minutes. Number of sports hours per week: 2 (Tuesday and Friday). The control group benefited from the same sports class, but without performing these exercises.

Models of structures in swings:

A. From the standing position: 1 standing; 2. bend the right leg with the right arm bent obliquely upwards and the left arm bent obliquely downwards; 3. passing the weight on both

legs with the knees bent simultaneously, with the great bending of the torso forward, with the back rounded and the head in flexion. 4. lateral flexion on the left leg with the left arm obliquely upwards and the right arm bent obliquely downwards.

Standing with legs apart: arms side right: 1- side step to the right followed by swinging the torso and arms in a horizontal arc from right to left, with slightly bending the knees, 2. completed with a turn of 90 degrees to the left standing on the left leg, the right back on the tip, by time-type movement; 3-4. return to the starting position and move to the right by temps-lie movement.

On the knees: arms sideways to the right. 1. sitting on the heel, 2. swinging the trunk in a horizontal arc, from right forward to left and back on the knees, once the balance is completed.

Left costal position: support on the left forearm: 1 - 2. balance of the right leg up to the level of the ear, 3 - 4. lifting the pelvis from the ground and support on the left arm and the tip of the right foot, with the right arm forward. Repeat the structure to the left.

B. Moving complexes: Standing: 1 - 2. added chase step to the right; 3 - 4. 360 degrees turn on the right foot and then on the left, 5. cross step with the left foot in front, 6. swinging the right foot sideways, Grand-battement type with the right leg; 7. cross step with the right foot in front, 8. return.

Standing: 1. harrows - wine to the right with arms outstretched forward to the left leg, 3. harrows - wine to the left with the left arm obliquely up and the right arm obliquely down, 4. return to the starting position.

Standing: 1 - 2. Change left chasse step with left foot, with sagittal rotation of the foot on the foot back up, stop on the right foot with the left foot back, stretched, 3 - 4. return, chasse back with the left foot and rotating the arms forward, down, back.

Standing: 1. Long jump, 2. sissonne jump, landing on the right leg, 3. swinging the left leg and keeping it on the side while raising the arms up, 4. return to the IP, 5-8. the same movement on the left leg.

Sitting: Parachute exercise. Moving forward with the parachute raised to the shoulders, on the music, in slow tempo. Exercise used to increase self-confidence.



Fig.5. Exercises for increasing self-confidence



Fig.6. Movements with the parachute

Standing: 1. Bending the torso forward with the parachute raised over the head with the arms raised forward. Maintaining this position 8 times. Switching from sitting to sitting with flexing the knees and lying on your back, another 8 times, on music.



Fig.7 Lifting the parachute overhead



Fig. 8 Lying on a parachute with your knees bent

Standing: 1. Lifting from dorsal to sitting on several 4 strokes, all at once and returning to dorsal on another 4 strokes. Slow tempo. It is used for teamwork, increasing self-confidence, and developing abdominal muscles. Sitting: Lifting the parachute above the head and slow running all in the same rhythm and tempo. It can be used to learn rhythm and tempo.



Fig. 9. Exercises with colored scarves

Repeat the exercise identically to the right, with the left leg flexed with the left arm obliquely up and the right arm obliquely down; 3-4. passing the weight on both legs with the knees bent simultaneously with the large bend of the torso forward, with the back rounded and the head flexed. 5-8 turning the torso to the right.

Sitting with the arms on the right side with the scarf: 1-2. lateral step to the right followed by swinging the torso and arms in a horizontal arc from right to left, with the knees bent; 3-4. turning 90 degrees to the left while sitting on the left leg, right back bent, by moving the weight from one foot to the other type of time movement; 5-6. return to the starting position and move to the right by temps-lie movement.

Standing: 1-2. step added, chasse type to the right, 3-4. turn right 360 degrees on the right foot, 5. cross step with the left foot forward, 6. swing the right foot sideways as much as possible, 7. cross step with the right foot forward, 8. return to PI.

Standing: 1-2. grape - wine to the right with arms outstretched forward to the left leg, clapping with the neighbor on the left, 3-4. grape - wine to the left with the left arm oblique up and the right arm oblique down, clapping with the neighbor on the right, 5-6. return to starting position.

Standing: 1-2. chasse forward with left foot, with arms rotated sagittal on foot back up, stop on right leg with left foot back, outstretched, 3-4. return to PI, 5-6. chasse back with left foot and rotating arms forward, down, back, 7-8. return to IP.

The results of this study are due to the intervention program through exercises in body technique and dance therapy performed by the experimental group compared to the control group. In the case of A-SN, it is a good correlation but of the opposite direction, which means that if (A) self-depreciation decreases then (SN) self-esteem increases. In the case of I-SN, it is an acceptable correlation and of the same meaning, which means that if (I) the infatuation increases and (SN) the self-esteem increases, were observed statistically significant differences between the two times ($p < 0.001$), see tab.1.

Ind	Time	Lot	Medi a	ES	Median	DS	Mi n	Ma x	Statistical significance (p)		
									I-II	II-I	TI-TII
A	T1	I	6,13	0,2743	5	1,5025	4	9	< 0,0001	Lot I	< 0,0001
		II	4,20	0,3159	4	1,7301	1	9			
	T2	I	5,13	0,2701	5	1,4794	3	8	< 0,0001	Lot II	0,032
		II	3,13	0,2826	3	1,5477	1	7			
I	T1	I	6,50	0,1962	6	1,0748	4	9	0,0669	Lot I	< 0,0001
		II	7,07	0,2534	7	1,3880	3	10			
	T2	I	7,47	0,1777	7	0,9732	5	9	< 0,0001	Lot II	< 0,0001
		II	8,97	0,1477	9	0,8087	7	10			

SN	T1	I	6,57	0,2943	7	1,6121	3	10	0,0032	Lot I	< 0,0001
		II	7,87	0,2945	8	1,6132	3	10			
	T2	I	7,57	0,2783	8	1,5241	4	10	< 0,0001	Lot II	< 0,0001

Tabel 1. ASSI questionnaire – studied lots and statistical significance

In the statistical analysis of the values for self-depreciation (A), for unpaired samples were observed statistically significant differences between the two groups ($p < 0.001$) in both time points studied. In the statistical analysis for paired samples, statistically significant differences were observed between the two time points in both group I and group II ($p < 0.001$). We, therefore, observe a significant decrease in this value, marked in green in Table 1, which means that our intervention was useful to the experimental group in reducing their sense of self-depreciation thus, improving self-esteem.

As we can see in Table 1, in the statistical analysis of the values for infatuation (I) for unpaired samples, were observed statistically significant differences between the two groups ($p < 0.001$) in the final test (T2). In the statistical analysis for paired samples, statistically significant differences were observed between the two time points in group I ($p < 0.001$) and statistically significant differences in group II ($p < 0.05$). We mark these results with interest as they show us that the level of infatuation has increased significantly in both groups.

In the statistical analysis of the values for self-esteem (SN) for unpaired samples between the two groups, very statistically significant differences were observed in the initial test (T1) ($p < 0.01$) and statistically significantly significant differences in the final test (T2). ($p < 0.001$). In the statistical analysis for paired samples, statistically significant differences were observed between the two time points in both group I and group II ($p < 0.001$).

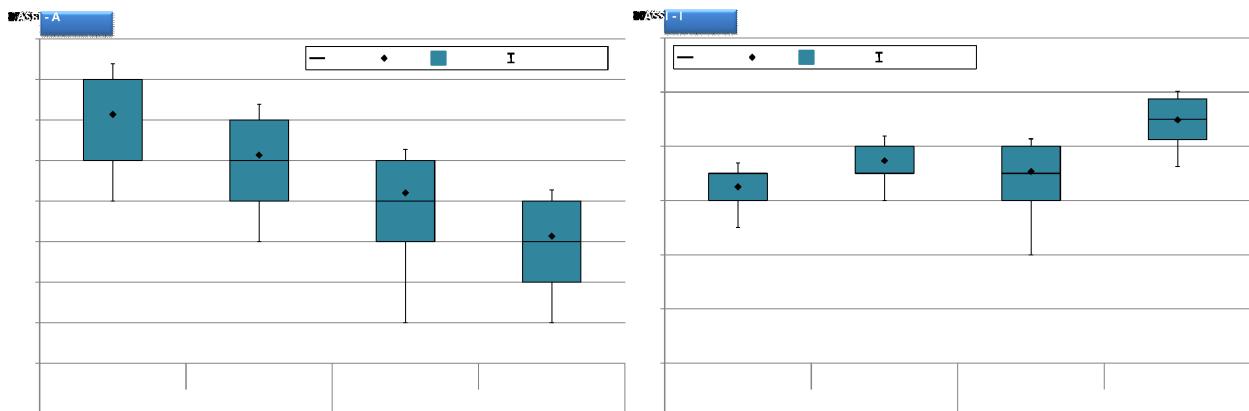


Fig. 12. Relation in the ASSI test of Autodepreciation at T1 and T2 (left)

Fig. 13. Relation in ASSI test of the Infatuation at T1 and T2 (right)

We, therefore, find that self-esteem improved in both groups, as expected, if we measured low values in the self-depreciation item (A), but it should be noted that in the experimental group in the final test (T2) the differences are much higher. Statistical analysis of the correlation between the values of the ASSI test items showed, as can be seen below. In lot I: an acceptable but opposite correlation between A-I, where the value of the A-I ratio from -0.3249 at the initial test (T1) will reach the value -0.2275 at the final test (T2)

- An acceptable and similar correlation between I-SN at the initial test (T1) and the value of 0.3642 at the final test (T2) reaches the value of 0.3170. In group II: a good but opposite correlation between A-SN, where the initial test (T1) is -0.5215 and at the final test (T2) it reaches 0.1488 - An acceptable and similar correlation between I-SN, at the initial test (T1) is 0.3282, and at the final test (T2) is 0.2554.

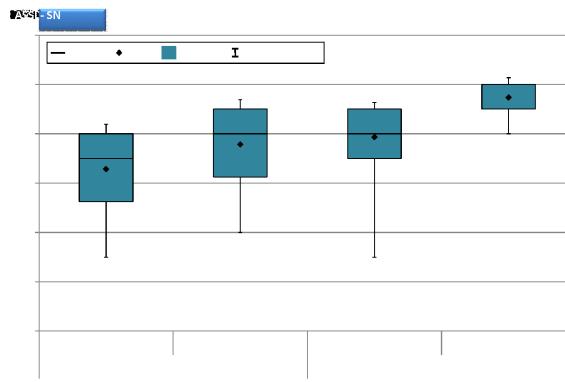


Fig. 14. Relation of the ASSI test of (SN) self-confidence Tabel 2. Statistical analysis of correlation between the values of the ASSI questionnaire

	A-I	-	
Lot I	A-SN	0,3249	**
	I-SN	0,1756	*
	I-SN	0,3642	**
Lot II	A-I	-	
	A-SN	0,0837	*
	I-SN	0,5215	***
	I-SN	0,3282	**

We can observe in Lot II between the values (A) self-depreciation and (SN) self-esteem a very good correlation of -0.5215. In Group I we have the value (I) of 6.50 at T1, and at T2 of 7.47, which means that (I) the infatuation in the control group increased. In group II, in T1 at (I) we have the value of 7.07 and at T2 of 8.97, so (I) the infatuation increased significantly in group II. The self-esteem (SN) in Group I at T1 was 6.57, and in TII it increased to 7.57. The self-esteem (SN) in Lot II was 7.87 in IT, and in Q2 9.47. Lot I, at T1 we have the value (A) of 6.13, while at T2 we have the value at (A) of 5.13, which means that (A) the self-depreciation at T2 in the control group decreased. In group II, we have the value (A) of 4.20 at T1, while at T2 we have the value (A) of 3.13 as can be seen in the table above.

The infatuation increased in group 1 at T2 compared to T1, initially the average being 6.50 then 7.47 at T2. In group 1, self-esteem increased: from an average of 6.57 in Q1, it reached 7.57 in Q2. In group II, in Q1 the average was 7.87 and reached 9.47 in Q2.

Lot	Indicator	Timp 1	Timp 2
I	A-I	-	
	A-SN	0,3249	**
	I-SN	0,1756	*
II	A-I	0,3642	**
	A-SN	-	
	I-SN	0,0837	*
	A-I	-	
	A-SN	0,5215	***
	I-SN	0,3282	**

Tabel 3. Statistical analysis of correlation between the item values of the ASSI questionnaire

In group I, we have the following results: At 2 ** there is an acceptable correlation but of the opposite direction between A-I, which means if (A) self-depreciation decreases then (I) infatuation increases. The value of the A-I ratio from -0.3249 at the initial test (T1) will reach the value -0.2275 at the final test (T2). At 2 ** the I-SN case is an acceptable correlation and of the same meaning between I-SN and at the initial test (T1), the value of 0.364 and the final test (T2) reaches the value 0.3170, which means that the ratio between (I) infatuation and (SN) self-esteem remains approximately identical.

In group II, we have the following results: in case 1 * A-I is a good correlation but of opposite direction between A-SN. At 3 *** the A-SN case is a good correlation but of the opposite direction, which means that if (A) self-depreciation decreases then (SN) self-esteem increases. The values of -0.5215 T1 following the implementation of the intervention programs through dance and music reach T2 at a value of 0.1488. This shows that the intervention programs were well planned and dosed in the plan. At 2 ** the I-SN case is an acceptable correlation and of the same meaning, which means that if (I) the infatuation increases and (SN) the self-esteem increases.

Discussions and Conclusions: statistically significant differences were observed in the indicators of the ASSI tests (self-depreciation, self-esteem, infatuation) which indicates, that our intervention program in the preliminary study had a positive and measurable impact on students in terms of improving self-depreciation and infatuation, as well as increasing self-esteem. The dance-therapy theory is based on the principle that the mind and body interact. Therefore, the therapist-client relationship is based in part on non-verbal cues, such as body language (Dobrescu, 2006). Improvisation of movements allows the client to experience new ways of being, and dance-therapy provides a way or channel in which the client can consciously understand early relationships with negative stimuli through non-verbal mediation by the therapist (Levy, 1988).

Conclusions of the ASSI questionnaire: the figures of the results of the ASSI questionnaire are more than encouraging as they show us that our intervention program had a positive influence in improving the studied indicators. Subjects increased their self-esteem and infatuation scores and decreased self-depreciation scores. Given these results, we conclude that so far, our hypotheses are confirmed by validating the tests used and the intervention program, which has largely achieved the desired impact. By uniting body, mind and spirit, dance therapy provides a sense of integrity for all individuals (Grosu et al., 2011). The body discharges energy through musculoskeletal reactions to stimuli received from the brain. The mind refers to mental activities such as memory, imagery, perception, attention, reasoning and decision making. Spirit refers to the state of feelings subjectively experienced in engaging or empathetically observing dance (Hanna, 2007). Dance movement brings many benefits to our health, both physically and mentally regardless of age. In contemporary postmodern societies, the self is less and less predictable, unstable, present in the multitude of social values. The postmodern self appears to be subject to dilemmas that Giddens (2010) conceptualizes as follows: in contemporary societies, reflective self-profiling, which can plan life coherently and assume uncertainty and seek specialized help in crisis situations, own existence. The constituents of self-image include the following elements: the evolution of performance, one's own opinion about failures and achievements, the impression left on others (friends, relatives, teachers, coaches, colleagues, etc.) and school results (Giddens, 2010).

Limitations of the research: not all students were able to perform exactly the specific elements of dance present in the intervention program, the movements leaving room for improvement in some subjects, but we believe that this does not influence the results

obtained as the entourage and atmosphere it was ensured thus, giving the possibility of psychic improvements, the objectives that were targeted in our research.

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**LITERACY STRATEGIES
AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL
COMPETENCE IN PEDAGOGICAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. RESULTS OF AN
EXPERIMENTAL STUDY CONDUCTED AT 10TH GRADE LEVEL**

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Abstract. *In a world of permanent change, the field of education is on an endless quest and upgrade to meet today's challenges, particularly complex for both teachers and students.*

Building on the reality of today's school, when students have to prove, at the end of their studies, certain competence in order to integrate from a social and professional standpoint and need to take several steps in order to reach the level of competence in a particular area, there is a pressing need to change the way learning is perceived. Research in pedagogy has proven the effectiveness of the strategies placing the student at the heart of teaching. In order for students to reach the stage of key competencies at the end of compulsory schooling and professional competencies for labor market integration, an important step would be to activate them in the learning process aimed at developing their learning skills. Literacy strategies are a key element in achieving the learning-to-learn goal, they provide teachers and students with methodological resources for the in-depth study of scientific texts, for the transfer and operationalization of the concepts acquired.

Individual study and the ability to learn are, for the exhaustive training of future teachers, key elements, starting points in the preparation for the teaching profession. Literacy strategies allow the student to form individual learning skills concurrently to skills for interpreting any scientific or literary text, transferring information to and from different fields, applying information studied, knowing when and how to use information assimilated, all of these skills required in teaching and beyond. This article illustrates the results obtained after the implementation of a training intervention having as objective the development of skills specific to the professional competence of the teacher. The intervention consisted of a program based on literacy strategies specific to scientific texts, in this case, pedagogical texts, applied to a group of 10th grade students, from pedagogical high school.

Furthermore, elements in the field of health education that are influenced by literacy strategies will also be highlighted.

Keywords: competence, professional competence, teacher's professional competence, literacy, functional literacy, literacy strategies, health education

Introduction

In a world of continuous change, the area of education is always in demand and updating in order to face the current challenges which are extremely complex for teachers as well as students. The ending of education is expressed in terms of competence, while the evaluation

of candidates from a professional perspective is also done in the competencies area. Therefore, even in the teaching career appears a need to develop the professional competencies of future teachers. The development of the professional competence of a primary school teacher is a long-term complex endeavor with a lot of important strategies.

The literacy strategies offer methodological resources to teachers and students in order to perform an in-depth study of scientific texts, for the transfer and manipulation of the acquired competencies, this aspect is considered essential in the development of the professional competence of the primary school teacher.

Having trained and at the same time developed literacy abilities, the high school student, pedagogical specialty, future primary school teacher, will have the ability to pass on to the future students these study instruments, channeling their development towards the habit, and later on the competence, of learning to learn. "The role of the teacher is to teach the student to teach by using information resources, and by selecting and incorporating the acquired information in one's cognitive system" (Albulescu, 2008, p. 63).

Because the development of literacy abilities is essential for a teacher for the building of his/her professional development as well as personal development, both requiring as a base the abilities necessary for lifelong learning, an experimental endeavor was chosen for the students from the pedagogical high school.

The studies done in this field are scarce in literature because the implementation of literacy strategies on scientific texts is a relatively new educational practice in our country. Another aspect that adds novelty to the research is the fact that literacy is linked to the professional competence field of the primary school teacher. The third aspect of novelty is that, in our country, the professional competence of the primary school teacher can be certified after graduation from a specialized high school which is a sparingly seen phenomenon in Europe. Besides, the working strategies presented in this research are suggestions of good practice for the educational field in general, especially the pedagogical high school. These can be successfully used in the teaching activity and extended to various study disciplines.

Besides, the literacy strategies come to the aid of students who learn types of study specific to various disciplines, therefore supporting efficient and coherent learning which helps with the student's mental health. By frequently applying the literacy strategies while learning, the students will become functionally literate, which means functional illiteracy will be eliminated.

The learning strategies target all types of learning: visual, auditory, kinesthetic. Therefore, the efficiency of learning can be analyzed from this perspective as well: the student, knowing one's main learning style can use a certain category of literacy strategies, avoiding physical exhaustion and, implicitly, the fatigue brought by chaotic or disorganized learning.

By paying attention to the development of the professional competence of the teacher, especially in primary school, it is intended for a future teacher to have the necessary knowledge in all fields, including the field of self-development and health education. This aspect also involves the hygiene of learning, and a healthy lifestyle, physically as well as mentally.

Considering these conditions, I believe that literacy strategies are essential elements in the development of the professional competence of primary school teachers.

Literature review

In the last decades, entering the workforce implies the ability of the individual to provide competencies. Competencies are formed and developed during a lifetime. The literature, as well as the legal documents, offer detailed definitions of the word *competence*. One definition of competence is: "the ability to do what is necessary" (Longman - *Dictionary of English*

Language and Culture, 2005, p. 278). In the same resource can be found the equivalence of the word *competence* with *skill*. Another definition goes: "the ability to do something well" (*Cambridge Dictionary*, 2018).

In the *Business Dictionary* paper, competence is presented as: "A cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person (...) to act effectively in a job or situation. Competence indicates the sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. Because each level of responsibility has its requirements, competence can occur in any period of a person's life or at any stage of his or her career" (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/competence.html>).

In the *Praxeological pedagogical dictionary* (Bocoş, coord., 2016) the notion of having competence is delimited from being competent: "Being competent is not the same thing with having competencies. Being competent implies knowing how to act in a qualitative, efficient, and prompt manner, in a category/class of similar or atypical situations. Due to personal competencies, a person can act appropriately and efficiently, can think critically, can (...) make pertinent decisions, can select, analyze, and synthesize information, can judge, can argue, can identify, and solve problems, can handle various situations" (Bocoş, 2016, p. 222).

Knowledge, abilities, and attitudes are the three defining elements of the concept of *competence*.

In literature, the demarcation of professional competence of the teacher is done after different criteria: some favor knowledge, skills, abilities based on the craftsmanship of being a teacher, while others specify exactly the fields in which a teacher must excel.

Ioan Jinga describes the professional competence of a teacher as a "system of cognitive, motivational, and management skills which interact with the personality traits of the teacher, offering him/her the necessary qualities in order to implement a teaching method that will ensure the fulfillment of the planned objectives for most of the students, and the performance must be close to the maximum level of intellectual potential of each individual" (Jinga, 1998).

Vasile Chiş (2014) presents basic skills for the professionalization of the teaching career. In the opinion of the modern pedagogy, these skills are: "Interactivity, sociability, communication, alternative strategies (Chiş, 2014, p. 134).

Emil Păun defines competence as a matrix in which the elements function in their entirety, simultaneously, in a prototype situation (Păun, 2017). The competence, seen from this perspective, of a matrix, is standardized using assessment forms that describe the profile of training teachers. The competence is sometimes interpreted as excellency in a certain field, therefore a person that shows "a big competence in a certain field comparatively with one that does not have that particular competence" (Păun, 2017, p. 177). Dan Potolea and Steliană Toma delimited and grouped the fields of competence in the teaching profession. (Bucharest, 2013, www.congresuleducatiei.ro/ckfinder/.../SToma_%20DPotolea.pdf).

In this document, there are mentioned three main categories of competencies for the teaching profession: specialized competencies, professional competencies, cross-cutting competencies, the component of each field being clearly presented. According to the CNCIS (National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education) Methodology (OMEI 4430/2009), specialized competencies are presented as knowledge and abilities.

By using as a starting point, the large array of definitions and classifications in the professional competence of the teacher, we will use as a working definition a classification made by connecting the information from the current law with the present pedagogical perspectives and the goals specified in the pedagogical high school's curriculum. Conceptually the term of *professional competence* will be used, while structurally and functionally an arrangement in layers will be made based on levels of competence. Therefore, *the professional competence of the teacher represents the system of his/her ability to transpose theoretical information in practically applied situations in order to efficiently coordinate the educational activity, properly and creatively manage situations in the educational practice which is formed*

by: general professional competencies, specific professional competences, and cross-cutting competencies. Each dimension is formed by knowledge, abilities, and attitudes.

Literacy is an essential element in order to create an independent learning style, an important part in forming and developing professional competencies.

The concept of *literacy* is defined by OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) as the *ability to understand a text and use the written knowledge in day-to-day life, at the workplace, and in collectivity to achieve certain personal goals and complete knowledge and abilities* (OECD, 2000).

In the *Cambridge Dictionary*, literacy is defined as: “the ability to read and write” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/literacy>), the meaning of this definition being of basic literacy.

A more detailed definition of literacy was proposed by UNESCO: “the ability to read and write, identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written material, as well as the ability to solve problems in an environment increasingly richer in technology and information” (UNESCO, 2015) (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370416>). Therefore, literacy encompasses abilities to understand the text and using the acquired information for personal and professional purposes as well as writing and mathematical abilities.

The term *literacy* has different depths and meanings for the educational systems in European as well as American countries, constituting an operational notion for all the disciplines and all the levels of learning.

Therefore, differences in the term can be found in the foreign literature based on the field where it is applied. The expression *Content area literacy strategies* names the literacy strategies applied irrespective of the studied learning discipline. The strategies mentioned are defined by “the ability to use reading and writing to learn the subject matter in a discipline, which are the fundamental abilities that a “novice” might use to make sense of a disciplinary text.” These abilities can be generalized to study all disciplines. It is a basic step in forming literacy competence. (https://www.sedl.org/.../teaching_content_area_literacy_and_disciplinary_literacy.pdf). The abilities mentioned are developed during the entire process of schooling, especially during the first years of studying, and are the stepping stone for literacy in the scientific disciplines.

In order to define the literacy competencies necessary for texts with scientific content specific to a discipline, the term *disciplinary literacy* (www.sedl.org) is used. The definition of the concept “focuses on how reading and writing are used in the process of studying a discipline. It “emphasizes the unique tools that the experts in a disciplined use to participate in the work of that discipline.” (www.sedl.org) *Disciplinary literacy* is “a term used to refer to the unique or extremely specialized ways in which reading and writing are used in different disciplines.” (Shanahan, 2018)

This research will refer to the literacy specific to the study of one discipline.

Methodology

The importance of abilities and competencies in literacy is increased because this ability is the stepping stone for *lifelong learning* and ensures functional literacy.

Emphasizing the importance of literacy in an educational, professional, and social context, I found this ability to be essential in the development of the professional competence of the primary school teacher. Therefore, in order to become a professional in education, it is necessary to develop certain specific learning abilities, such as: analyzing, synthesizing, selecting, correlating, and transposing in new contexts the information acquired from the written text or other learning resources for personal and professional development as well as developing this competence in students.

Therefore, I intend to highlight in this research the implications of applying literacy strategies in the teaching activity in order to develop the professional competence of the primary school teacher for the pedagogical high school students. The research has as a basis the experiment and went through the following stages: the pre-experimental stage, the formative experiment stage, the post-experimental stage, and the re-testing stage.

The scope of the research aimed to structure and implement an intervention program that could lead to improving the performance of the student from the pedagogical high school by applying the literacy strategies (disciplinary literacy) for the specialized disciplines in order to form professional competencies. The following goals of the research were formed:

- 1) The development of an intervention program to develop professional competence for the pedagogical high school students by systematically applying literacy strategies.
- 2) Establishing a correlation between the specific literacy strategies used and the development of the abilities of learning and applying the professional concepts.
- 3) The emphasis in the intervention program on the activities that lead to the development of critical and creative analysis of the pedagogical concepts studied in scientific texts.

The research questions were the following:

- a) To what extent can professional competence be formed and developed through literacy strategies for the pedagogical high school students?
- b) Which are the components of the teacher's professional competence which can be developed mainly through literacy strategies?
- c) Which are the literacy strategies with the potential to optimize the development of professional competence for the pedagogical high school students?

In order to conduct the research, a general hypothesis was formulated and detailed in two specific hypotheses.

The general hypothesis is the following: *The systematical use of literacy strategies in teaching specialization disciplines for the students in the pedagogical high school, teacher-educator specialization (10th grade), significantly contributes toward the development of professional competence.*

The two specific hypotheses are:

H1: The systematical use of literacy strategies in teaching pedagogical disciplines for the students in the pedagogical high school significantly contributes to the increase of school performance highlighted through the level of applicability of theoretical knowledge.

H2: There is a significant correlation between the use of literacy strategies in the study of specialty texts and the development of the professional competence of the teacher, detailed in the ability to know and comprehending pedagogical concepts, abilities to explain and interpret, and critical thinking and application abilities.

The variables of research have been established. *The independent variable* was an intervention program that has literacy strategies applied in the teaching-learning of specialization pedagogical disciplines for the pedagogical high school students, teacher-educator specialization in 10th grade. *The dependent variables* tracked: The level of assimilation of pedagogical concepts as basic elements informing the professional competence in pedagogical high school students; the level of development of professional competence of the teacher in pedagogical high school students, competence transposed into knowledge, abilities, attitudes; the level of development of the ability to know and comprehending pedagogical concepts, abilities to explain, interpret, and perform critical thinking towards pedagogical concepts for the students in 10th grade; the level of development of abilities to apply the pedagogical concepts for the students in 10th grade as essential elements in the development of the professional competence.

The formative experiment took place during 4 semesters, as follows: the school year 2017-2018 - the second part of the second semester - the implementation of the pre-test; the

school year 2018-2019 - the first semester and partially the second semester - experimental intervention stage; the school year 2018-2019 - the end of the second semester - the implementation of the post-test; the school year 2019-2020 - second semester - the implementation of the re-test.

The experiment took place for a longer period, respecting the school year structure. The intervention was made in a more compact period, a school year, in order to observe the impact of the independent variable on the experimental group. The post-test was implemented at the end of the intervention and the re-test was implemented at the beginning of the following school year, thus checking the steadiness of the findings and abilities obtained by the students. There was a three-month period between the post-test and re-test stage, an interval marked by the summer holiday. Therefore, it was intended to check and assess the steadiness of the findings and abilities after a period of school inactivity.

The research activity in all the stages of the experimental approach was done on all the students from the vocational pedagogical high school, teacher-educator specialization. The selected student groups for the present research are forming the research sample. The criteria at the base of the formation of the sample were: high school students, upper secondary education, lower high school cycle: 10th grade; type of high school: vocational; section: pedagogy; specialization: teacher-educator.

I chose the 10th grade because it is a lower-level high school grade, mandatory education, and the differentiated Curriculum targets fewer school disciplines with a direct impact in forming professional competencies. Therefore, for the students in the aforementioned grades, the development of professional competence is in an incipient stage. This is important in order to observe at the end of the intervention program the impact of it (and not other factors) on the development of certain specific abilities in students to the professional competence of the teacher. The student's gender was not a criterion in establishing the research group because the school population in pedagogical high school is mainly formed by girls.

The groups of students were selected from two pedagogical colleges: National Pedagogical College "Andrei Șaguna" from Sibiu and National Pedagogical College "Gheorghe Lazăr" from Cluj-Napoca. The reason for collaborating with another high school was the low number of classes per grade for the teacher-educator specialization. Therefore, the control classes needed to collaborate with another high school with the same profile. Besides, the fact that the control group is part of another institution increased the objectivity of the results of the research.

The experimental group was formed by 54 subjects (two 10th grade classes) and the control group had 57 subjects (two 10th grade classes), a total of 111 subjects.

The experimental approach took place during the pedagogical disciplines about the differentiated Curriculum, 10th grade, pedagogy section; teacher-educator specialization: *The theory and practice of teaching and evaluation* and *Class management in students*, according to the level of the formative experiment. The framework mentions only one hour a week for specialization disciplines. Considering the small number of hours during which the formative intervention could be applied, I thought it necessary to extend the formative experiment for approximately two semesters.

The content samples selected for the 10th grade and proposed for the period of the formative intervention were according to the current school curricula (*School curricula for pedagogical and psychological disciplines*, approved by the Order of the Minister No. 4875/06.11.2002). The resources used were school textbooks as well as other scientific papers in the field: I. Cerghit, I. T. Radu, E. Vlăsceanu, E. Popescu, *Teaching - textbook for pedagogical high schools*, EDP, 1996; M. Bocoș, D. Jucan (2017), *The theory and methodology of training. Theory and methodology of evaluation. Benchmarks and teaching instruments for teacher training*, 3rd edition, Paralela 45 Publishing House, Pitești; R. Iucu (2006), *Class of students'*

management, Polirom Publishing House, Iași; C. Ceobanu, A. Gherguț et al. (2010), *Introduction to class of students management*, Universitatea Al. I. Cuza Publishing House, Iași; E. Stan (2005), *Class management*, Aramis Publishing House, București.

The literacy strategies applied to the mentioned disciplines were diverse and applied gradually. All included specific elements that must be monitored in literacy-based activities. These elements are: "Connecting, visualizing, deducting, composing questions, determining important notions, and summarizing." (*Literacy Strategies for Teachers*, 2018).

The abilities specific to the dependent variable tracked in the experimental approach were: *Learning and comprehension abilities, abilities to explain and interpret, and critical thinking and application abilities* (according to the *School curricula for pedagogical and psychological disciplines*, approved by the Order of the Minister No. 4875/ 06.11.2002, <http://www.ise.ro/>).

Literacy strategies applied in the intervention program, correlated with the abilities specific to the dependent variable were (Table 1):

Category	Strategy	Sought abilities			
		Learning and comprehension	Explaining and interpreting	Application	Critical thinking
Strategies based on systematization of the information using graphical organizers	Concept defining map	*	*	*	
	Conceptual map	*	*	*	
	Frayer Matrix	*		*	*
	Mind Map	*	*		*
Strategies with a focus on predicting and discovering information using text analysis	Snowball	*	*	*	
	Listen, Read, Discuss (LRD)	*	*		*
	RICAR	*	*	*	*
Strategies that improve the learning by reflection	The graphic representation of the concepts	*	*		

Table no. 1. Literacy strategies applied in the intervention program, correlated with the abilities specific to the dependent variable.

Operational instruments of collecting the used data were: docimological tests, self-evaluation sheets of the learning activity - *Reflection journal*, evaluation sheets of team activities, *exit notes* to get feedback from students, as well as specific online instruments such as google docs.

Reflection journals, exit notes, as well as *self-evaluation/evaluation sheets of team activities* were used as meta-cognitive instruments of learning. Their role was to offer feedback on the way in which students perceived the new methods applied in the activity, the aspects considered to be difficult or meaningful for the understanding and analysis of the concepts as well as their implementation.

The data gathered as well as the mentioned instruments (tests) were analyzed and interpreted, then showed using a graphic representation, using as instruments Windows and the SPSS software, 22.0 version.

Therefore, data preprocessing of the relevant variables for the chosen theme was done using the statistical software SPSS. Descriptive analysis, testing of hypotheses, correlations, building, and validation of certain regression models were performed. The tests performed for the present research - pre-test, post-test/re-test - are new non-standard instruments, therefore the validation of the used items was necessary by calculating the Cronbach's scales internal reliability alpha coefficient and the grouping of items in constructed variables based on the results obtained after performing the Principal Components Analysis (PCA). The items selected by the PCA were suitably grouped in 3-4 global constructs using the scale adding operation. Data preprocessing of the relevant variables for the chosen theme was done in the statistical software SPSS. Descriptive analysis, testing of hypotheses, correlations, building, and validation of certain regression models were performed. Applying the Cronbach's Alpha analysis and Principal Components Analysis (PCA) on the instrument used in the pre-test stage, as well as on the one used in the post-test stage was mandatory. The Cronbach's Alpha value recorded in the research instruments sections was between 0.417 - the minimum accepted value (Hinton et al., 2004) - and 0.696 - a value above the minimum threshold.

The constructed variables have been established, are created using the method of adding the scores of the associated items to each extracted component using the Principal Components Analysis. This operation was applied to the entire database irrespective of the group of which the students are part.

In the pre-experimental stage, the results of the research underlined the following performances:

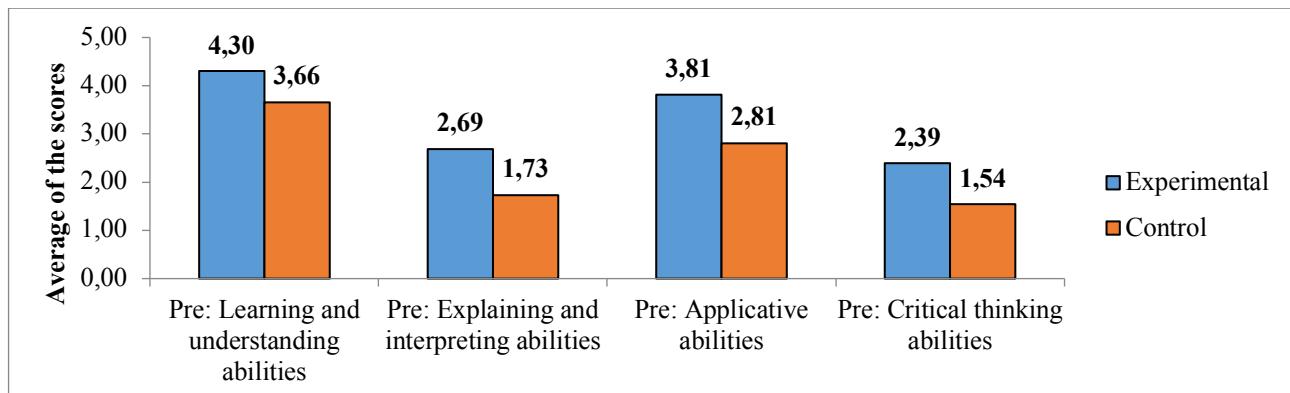


Fig. 1. Comparisons between the results of the classes, 10th grade, the experimental group and the control group

There are differences between the results recorded in the two tested groups. The observed differences vary between 0.635 and 1 point from the average of the scores. The increased performances are recorded for both groups in the *abilities to know and comprehending pedagogical concepts and application abilities*.

After the implementation of the formative intervention program stage for the experimental group, a specific research instrument was applied (test) for the pre-test stage in order to quantify the obtained results and in order to analyze if there are differences between the recorded performances of the experimental group compared to the control group, as well as compared to the pre-experimental stage.

The results obtained in post-test comparatively to the results obtained in pre-test for the experimental group are (Fig. 2):

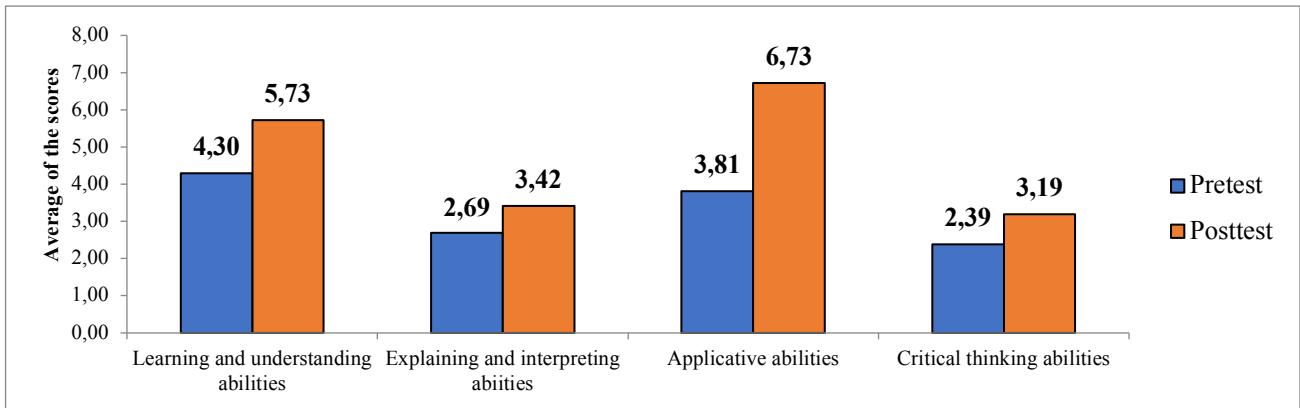


Fig. 2. Comparative analysis - pre-test-post-test - 10th grade - experimental group

As can be seen, the recorded results between the two stages are different, being higher for the post-test stage. In order to establish if the observed differences in the second stage are statistically significant, the data were statistically analyzed and interpreted using the T-test. Following the presented statistical analysis, the SIG values were <0.01 , meaning that the H_0 null hypothesis is rejected. In conclusion, the differences between the scores' averages in pre-test from the post-test are statistically significant, at a 1% level of significance.

The values for the t-test when comparing the two results from the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group, 10th grade, are different, the differences between the averages are relevant which, on a level of significance higher than the critical threshold, are significant. Therefore, the performance of the experimental group, 10th grade, is significantly increased in the post-test stage from the pre-test stage.

Results were compared between the two groups, experimental and control, in the post-experimental stage.

The results are the following (Fig. 3):

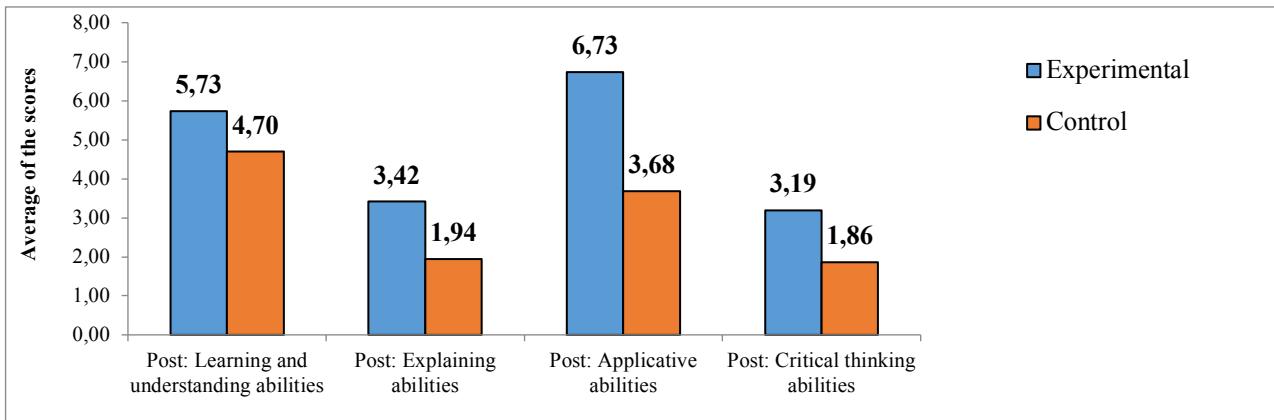


Fig. 3. Comparisons between the results, 10th grade, the experimental group and the control group

The results of the independent T-test highlight the existing differences between the control group and the experimental group as statistically significant for all the tested abilities. The null hypothesis H_0 is rejected on a level of significance of 0.1% (Sig. values <0.001), meaning there is a statistically significant difference between the groups when it comes to the average of the variables' scores. To be more exact, the observed differences vary between 1.031 and 3.045 points from the average of the scores, favoring the experimental group (higher averages, increased abilities).

The experimental group recorded higher scores than the control group for all the tested abilities, therefore the general hypothesis of the research, as well as the two specific ones, are completely confirmed.

The stability of the findings in the formative intervention period and observed in the post-test stage was verified by applying a test specific to the re-test stage. In this stage, the re-test stage, the results obtained in the experimental group were the following: the learning and comprehending abilities had a score of 5.55 points, while the abilities in applying and interpreting had 3.36 points. For the application abilities, the registered performance in the re-test stage was 7.11, while for the critical thinking abilities the obtained performance was 3.21 points.

Comparatively analyzing the results obtained in the two stages of the research, post-test and re-test, for the experimental group, maintenance or an increase of the performances recorded in the post-test stage was observed (Fig. 4):

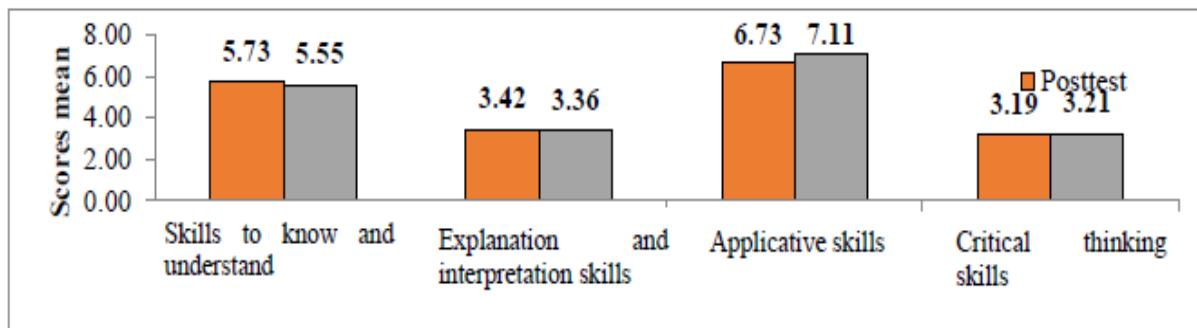


Fig. 4. Comparative results - post-test - re-test - 10th grade - experimental group

Following the re-test, it was observed that the abilities formed in the intervention program period were proved to be stable, some of them approximately with the same value as the post-test stage, while the others being consolidated. A slight increase in the application abilities has been noticed. These aspects underline the consistency and stability of the findings obtained during the intervention program and observed during the post-test stage. The confirmation of the specific hypothesis and the general hypothesis done after the post-test stage remains.

In this stage, there are visible differences between the experimental and the control group for the average values of the analyzed constructed variables (Fig 5).

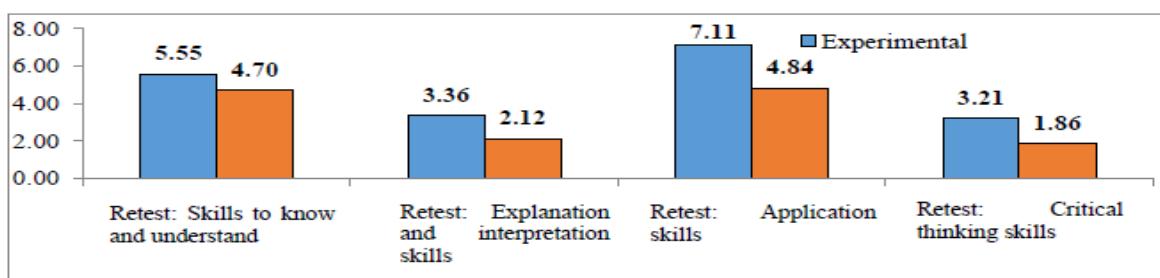


Fig. 5. Comparisons between the results on components, 10th grade, the experimental group and the control group

Comparatively to the post-test stage, the average scores of these variables are approximately the same.

The existing differences between the control group and the experimental group are statistically significant for all the tested abilities. The biggest difference between the averages is for the applicative abilities, with a 2.273 points difference. The null hypothesis H_0 is rejected on a level of significance of 0.1% (Sig. values <0.001), meaning there is a statistically

significant difference between the groups when it comes to the average of the variables' scores.

Conclusion

Following the experimental research, certain conclusions can be formulated:

1. An increase in the performance of the experimental group was observed, performances being statistically significant;
2. Following the performed statistical analysis, it was demonstrated that the literacy strategies significantly contribute to the development of the professional competence of the primary school teacher;
3. The abilities of increased complexity, as well as the application and critical thinking abilities, are those on which the literacy strategies have a direct, immediate and statistically significant effect;
4. The general hypothesis and the specific hypotheses were validated.
5. Development of the abilities of critical thinking and creative analysis of the pedagogical concepts studied in scientific texts was observed in students.
6. A structured program was proposed and followed which can be applied in the teaching activity.
7. The literacy strategies were valued for the scientific texts through a specific intervention program for the teaching disciplines.

The practical application of the research

The results of the research can be applied in various areas of social and economic life. A very important aspect is the fact that, by applying the literacy strategies in the teaching activity, the participating students will possess literacy abilities, will be functionally literate, overcoming functional illiteracy. The students can apply the literacy strategies in their teaching activity as future teachers, benefiting the primary school students who will become functionally literate. The decrease of functional illiteracy is an exceptionally important challenge for our country's entire society.

For the pedagogical high school graduates, as well as their future students, the literacy strategies contribute to the formation of an efficient learning style, being the stepping stone for individual learning and contributing to learning hygiene.

A functionally literate adult is efficient at the workplace, can manage his/her physical resources, study aspects of his/her health, and permanently acquire information. This aspect targets all the areas of economic activity.

The pedagogical high school graduate, future teacher, a participant of the current research, will be able to get involved in school and outside of school activities together with the students of the class he/she will be managing, activities that will promote a healthy lifestyle.

Of course, this research can be performed in other areas, on differently chosen samples, to target other components of the professional competence of the primary school teacher as well.

But it is important due to the fact that it opens a new perspective on a themeless research: the correlation between the literacy strategies and the professional competence of the primary school teacher.

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PERSPECTIVE TEORETICE PRIVIND ANGAJABILITATEA ABSOLVENȚILOR DE STUDII SUPERIOARE. COMPETENȚE SPECIFICE ANGAJABILITĂȚII ȘI INTRAREA PE PIATA MUNCII

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Abstract: *Angajabilitatea absolvenților de studii superioare a devenit un subiect de interes pentru mai mulți stakeholderi și este din ce în ce mai investigată datorită implicațiilor sociale și economice pe care le are asupra pieței forțelor de muncă. De asemenea, angajabilitatea absolvenților este considerată un indicator al performanței în determinarea calității învățământului superior. Prin urmare, în prezența lucrare sunt prezentate mai multe definiții și perspective asupra conceptului de angajabilitate și evidențiază implicațiile conceptului asupra a trei categorii de stakeholderi: universități, absolvenți și angajatori. Rolul instituțiilor de învățământ superior este de a crește gradul de angajabilitate și de a facilita tranziția pe piața muncii a propriilor absolvenți, prin ofertele educaționale și îmbunătățirea continuă a procesului de instruire. Toate aceste acțiuni sunt necesare pentru a compatibiliza cerințele pieței muncii cu programele de studiu din cadrul universităților și pentru ca studenții să poată dezvolta abilitățile necesare pentru ocuparea forței de muncă. Calificările obținute în urma absolvirii studiilor superioare sunt considerate resurse esențiale și reprezintă o dimensiune cheie a oportunităților viitoare de angajare, deschizând o gamă largă de oportunități economice, profesionale și sociale. Cea de-a doua categorie de stakeholderi, care în fapt, convertește piața muncii sunt angajatorii. Aceștia au un rol esențial în definirea conceptului de angajabilitate, deoarece tind să valorizeze experiențele profesionale și activitățile extra-curriculare care adaugă valoare candidatului. Absolvenții trebuie să aibă abilități profesionale și o gamă mai extinsă de competențe generice sau transversale care să fie compatibile cu diverse contexte. Conform literaturii de specialitate, aceste competențe transferabile sunt necesare proaspătilor absolvenți pentru a se putea diferenția de alți candidați care aplică pentru același loc de muncă. Prin urmare, diplomele universitare nu mai sunt suficiente pentru angajatori, ci reprezintă doar standardul minim pentru recrutarea candidaților. Angajatorii caută competențe profesionale solide, dar pun mult accent și pe abilitățile specifice angajabilității precum: munca în echipă, abilități de comunicare, abilități de rezolvare a problemelor și alte abilități soft. Prezența lucrare își propune să prezinte mai multe perspective teoretice în ceea ce privește angajabilitatea absolvenților și să deschidă noi oportunități de cercetare cu privire la politicile educaționale privind învățământul terțiar și piața muncii din România.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *angajabilitate, absolvenți de studii superioare, competențe profesionale, competențe transversale, avantaj competitiv, piața muncii.*

Introducere

În prezent, există tot mai multe discuții legate de inserția tinerilor pe piața muncii și creșterea gradului de angajabilitate, prin intermediul educației și a competențelor dobândite. Tema inserției profesionale a absolvenților de învățământ superior este o temă de interes

național cât și internațional, care preocupă din ce în ce mai mult actorii implicați în domeniul educației universitare din întreaga Europă. Prezenta lucrare abordează una din temele intens dezbatute atât în literatura de specialitate, cât și în rândul actorilor instituționali - îmbunătățirea și compatibilizarea ofertelor educaționale din cadrul universităților cu cerințele pieței forțelor de muncă, pentru a spori gradul de angajabilitate al studenților după absolvirea studiilor superioare. Capacitatea de angajare a absolvenților sau termenul de "angajabilitate" a devenit din ce în ce mai urmărit, datorită implicațiilor de ordin economic și social pe care le presupune atât la nivel individual, cât și la nivel societal.

Există o presiune tot mai mare din partea guvernelor și a decidenților politici, din partea studenților și a familiilor acestora, asupra universităților din întreaga lume, pentru că "angajabilitatea absolvenților a fost recunoscută în mod clar ca unul dintre obiectivele principale ale educației universitare" (Sumanasiri, Yajid & Khatibi, 2015, 75). În fapt, educația are printre funcțiile sale responsabilitatea de a cultiva și de a forma profesional oamenii, pentru a se putea satisface nevoile pieței muncii (Cai, 2012, 457). Însă, pentru a dobândi un avantaj în poziționarea pe piața muncii, absolvenții de studii superioare trebuie să dezvolte abilități de angajare în plus, față de dobândirea de cunoștințe specifice subiectului de studiu, iar instituțiile de învățământ superior au un rol cheie de a identifica modalitățile de încorporare a cerințelor pieței muncii (Weligamage, 2009, 115).

În consecință, angajabilitatea absolvenților de studii superioare este un subiect de interes pentru mai mulți stakeholderi (angajatori, universități, candidați, etc.) care au implicații importante în conturarea angajabilității și în dezvoltarea competențelor necesare pentru intrarea pe piața muncii.

Definirea angajabilității

Acest domeniu de interes prezintă o vastă literatură de specialitate, iar termenul de angajabilitate se regăsește în multe definiții de lucru, însă studiul realizat de Hillage și Pollard (1998) poate fi considerat de pionierat, deoarece aceștia au rezumat pentru prima dată toate ideile anterioare și existente despre angajabilitate (Sumanasiri et al., 2015, 76).

O definiție larg acceptată de Hillage și Pollard (1998) definește angajabilitatea ca fiind "capacitatea individului de a obține un loc de muncă inițial, de a se deplasa între rolurile din cadrul aceleiași organizații, dar și de a obține noi locuri de muncă, dacă este necesar, și în mod ideal, de a obține locuri de muncă adecvate și satisfacatoare" (Qenani, McDougall, Sexton, 2014, 200-201).

Hillage și Pollard (1998) propun înțelegerea capacitații de angajare în jurul a patru elemente principale. Primul element, "activele de angajare" ale unei persoane care conform autorilor constau în cunoștințele, aptitudinile și atitudinile lor. Al doilea, "implementarea", include abilități de gestionare a carierei, inclusiv abilități de căutare a unui loc de muncă. În al treilea rând, "prezentarea" se referă la "abilitățile de obținere a unui loc de muncă", de exemplu scrierea CV-urilor, experiența de lucru și tehniciile de intervieware. Cu toate acestea, pentru ca o persoană să poată profita de "activele sale de angajare", depinde mult și de circumstanțele sale personale (de exemplu, responsabilitățile pe care le are o persoană în cadrul familiei) și de oportunitățile care se găsesc la momentul respectiv pe piața muncii (Dacre Pool, Sewell 2007, 278).

O altă definiție este conturată de Hinchcliffe (2001) care definește angajabilitatea ca "un set de abilități, cunoștințe, înțelegere și attribute personale care determină o persoană să aleagă și să asigure ocuparea unor locuri de muncă în care pot să cunoască sentimentul de satisfacție, cât și succesul" (Hinchcliffe 2001, 8 apud Dacre Pool, Sewell, 2007, 280). Autorul scoate în evidență faptul că nu este suficient doar obținerea unui loc de muncă, ci și obținerea sentimentelor de satisfacție și împlinire profesională care sunt asociate locului de muncă. Astfel, o persoană poate obține un loc de muncă stabil și chiar poate experimenta succesul în ocuparea aleasă, dar este posibil să nu prezinte satisfacție în poziția ocupată.

De asemenea, o definiție foarte des întâlnită în literatura de specialitate care se axează pe formarea competențelor necesare pentru angajare este enunțată de către Knight și Yorke care definesc angajabilitatea ca “un set de rezultate, aptitudini, competențe și atribute personale care le oferă o probabilitate mai mare absolvenților în a obține locuri de muncă precum și să aibă succes în cadrul posturilor alese, lucru de care beneficiază ei însăși, piața muncii, comunitatea și economia” (2006, 8). Autorii consideră că aceste abilități și competențe sunt necesare și cerute de către angajatori, deoarece se presupune că un absolvent prezintă angajabilitate în cazul în care poate demonstra un set de rezultate și competențe dobândite ca fiind relevante pentru postul dorit. Se poate observa că accentul este pus în primul rând pe detinerea competențelor relevante pentru locul de muncă, pe dezvoltarea profesională a absolvenților și implicit pe dezvoltarea economică a societății. Se extinde importanța angajabilității la un nivel macrosocial, deoarece un nivel ridicat de calificări, competențe și cunoștințe cresc performanțele economice ale unui stat, iar existența forței de muncă bine pregătite conduce la obținerea unui beneficiu național (Butum, Stan, Zodieru, 2015, 433).

Modelul de angajabilitate al lui Bridgstock (2009) evidențiază un set nou de competențe care sunt necesare pentru consolidarea angajabilității. Modelul subliniază cât este de important ca absolvenții să prezinte abilități de management al carierei. Bridgstock (2009) precizează faptul că angajabilitatea implică mai mult decât posesia abilităților generice și specifice relaționate domeniului de studiu. Într-o schimbare rapidă și competitivă a economiei, absolvenții trebuie să fie capabili să navigheze proactiv pe piața muncii și să reușesc să se adapteze constant la schimbări, să fie capabili să gestioneze procesul de construire a carierei (Cole & Tibby, 2013, 8).

Conform acestui model despre angajabilitate, abilitățile de angajare sunt compuse din abilitățile generice și specifice disciplinei care sunt necesare pentru obținerea performanței într-un loc de muncă, dar și abilități de management al carierei. Cele din urmă sunt împărțite în două categorii de competențe: auto-gestionarea și consolidarea carierei (Bridgstock, 2009). Autoarea precizează că “abilitățile și cunoștințele de gestionare a carierei sunt esențiale pentru angajabilitate, deoarece acestea joacă un rol important în a determina care, în ce măsură, în ce manieră, când și unde sunt învățate, afișate abilitățile generice și specifice (ex. în aplicarea pentru un loc de muncă) și utilizate” (Bridgstock, 2009, 36). Cu alte cuvinte, claritatea scopurilor profesionale și abilitățile de management al carierei sunt esențiale pentru absolvenți pentru a se putea adapta la schimbările și adversitățile care pot apărea pe piața muncii și pentru a putea crește profesional.

Potrivit lui Jackson și Tomlinson (2020, 3), progresul în carieră nu se limitează doar la o mișcare liniară, ascendentă, în rândul unui număr mic de angajatori, ci progresul în carieră este determinat de către absolvenții care își asumă responsabilitatea pentru auto-gestionarea carierei, pe fondul unei multitudini de posibilități. Acest lucru înseamnă că absolvenții trebuie să fie adaptabili, proactivi și să își planifice propria carieră, astfel încât, fiecare schimbare pe care o inițiază în traseul lor profesional să aducă plus-valoare carierei profesionale. Proactivitatea studenților în formarea obiectivelor și a aspirațiilor privind cariera profesională este legată de percepțiile mai largi despre angajabilitate și starea pieței muncii, iar o astfel de proactivitate tinde să conducă la studenți mult mai eficienți pe piața muncii. Studenții proactivi vor fi capabili să dezvolte strategii intenționante și să planifice acțiuni pentru gestionarea angajabilității lor viitoare (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020, 5).

Un alt aspect important de abordat și care are implicații asupra angajabilității viitoare este propria percepție a studenților cu privire la șansele de reușită pentru a obține un loc de muncă adecvat nivelului de calificare. Angajabilitatea auto-percepță se referă la percepțiile și convingerile studenților în legătură cu propriul potențial de a fi angajați cu normă întreagă după absolvire și la interpretările despre abilitățile personale de a găsi un loc de muncă (Berntson et al., 2006; Rothwell și Arnold, 2007, Qenani et al., 2014, 202). În fapt,

angajabilitatea auto-percepută se consideră a fi o evaluare a individului cu privire la propriile competențe generice și specifice unui loc de muncă, experiența în muncă, rețelele sociale relevante pentru angajare, trăsături personale (adaptabilitate, flexibilitate, auto-eficacitate) și cunoștințe despre starea pieței muncii (Gunawan, Creed & Glendon, 2019, 3).

Autorii Kornadt, Voss și Rotrhermund (2015), subliniază că părerile pozitive ale unei persoane cu privire la sinele profesional și la viitor vor fi asociate cu implicarea în comportamente care facilitează obținerea unor rezultate pozitive și atingerea obiectivelor propuse. În schimb, perspectivele de viitor negative implică așteptări pesimiste și tind să fie asociate cu implicarea scăzută în comportamente orientate spre obiectiv (Gunawan et al., 2019, 4). Prin urmare, percepția de sine a capacitatei de angajare este foarte importantă pentru proaspetii absolvenți care intră pe piața muncii. Încrederea absolvenților în propria reușită de angajare atrage după sine sentimente de securitate și independență, motivații și comportamente care pot duce ulterior la negocieri eficiente, performanțe mai bune la locul de muncă, rezistență la dificultăți, cariere mai reușite și o mai bună satisfacere a sănătății și a vieții (Berntson et al., 2006; Soens, 2008; Pool și Qualter, 2013, Qenani et al., 2014, 2002).

Prin urmare, capacitatea de angajare este o calitate a persoanei, care facilitează obținerea unui loc de muncă, însă autorii McGrath (2009) și Morley (2011) atrag atenția asupra faptului că nu reprezintă o garanție că va dobândi acel loc de muncă. Autorii scot în evidență că există mai mulți factori externi care vor determina dacă o persoană obține efectiv locul de muncă, iar printre aceștia se numără: disponibilitatea generală a locurilor de muncă, distribuția diferitelor tipuri de locuri de muncă, discriminarea potențială pe piața muncii și o serie de alți facilitatori sau alte constrângeri (McCowan, 2015, 270).

Angajabilitatea și rolul instituțiilor de învățământ superior

Conceptul de angajabilitate este legat de abilitățile dobândite, cerințele de la locul de muncă, segmentarea pieței muncii și de alți factorii determinanți ai succesului în carieră a absolvenților (Pavlin, 2014, 580). Din definițiile prezentate pentru angajabilitate, se poate observa că cele mai multe se referă la capacitatea unei persoane de a obține un loc de muncă semnificativ și la setul de competențe potrivite pentru acel loc de muncă. În fapt, definițiile angajabilității se împart în două categorii: definițiile "centrate pe ocuparea forței de muncă și definițiile centrate pe competențe" (EACEA, Eurydice, 2014, 61).

În ceea ce privește formarea abilităților și competențelor necesare pentru intrarea pe piața muncii, un rol important îl au instituțiile de învățământ superior care prin programele lor educaționale influențează gradul de angajabilitate și favorizează tranziția pe piața muncii a propriilor absolvenți. Învățământul universitar, "are rolul de a construi competitivitatea și de a produce absolvenți bine pregătiți care vor construi capitalul uman și intelectual, care să răspundă cerințelor economiei" (Butum, et al., 2015, 434). Prin programele educaționale oferite, universitățile pregătesc viitorii profesioniști care vor fi capabili să înțeleagă situații noi și să identifice care cunoștințe sunt relevante pentru o anumită situație.

De asemenea, se consolidează capacitatea studenților de a transpune cunoștințele dobândite în rezolvarea unei probleme relevante și de natură practică (Eraut, 2006 apud Pavlin, 2014, 577). Toate aceste cunoștințe și competențe practice contribuie semnificativ la îmbogățirea capitalului uman al absolvenților și au impact asupra capacitatei de angajare.

Harvey (2001) a prezentat modelul simplist de producere a absolvenților angajabili și de ocupare a forței de muncă numit modelul „The magic bullet”. Conform modelului său, glonțul magic constă în faptul că studenților li se dă oarecum posibilitatea de a fi angajați ca urmare a faptului că au urmat studiile superioare, ceea ce îi face să devină mai angajabili comparativ cu cei care nu prezintă studii superioare.

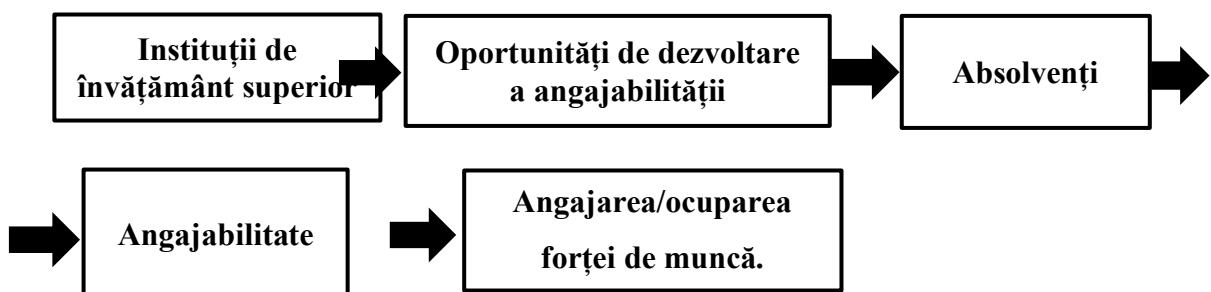


Figura 1: Modelul "Magic Bullet" de dezvoltare a capacitatii de angajare

Sursa: Harvey, L., (2001, 102)

Pornind de la analiza concepțiilor studenților despre învățământul universitar și angajabilitate, Tomlinson (2008, 54) apreciază că studiile superioare reprezintă o creștere semnificativă a nivelului de capital individual uman care le-ar oferi avantaje pe piața forței de muncă. În acest sens, calificările obținute prin intermediul învățământului superior sunt considerate o resursă importantă și o dimensiune-cheie a viitoarelor posibilități de angajare, deschizând o gamă mai largă de oportunități economice, ocupaționale și sociale, care altfel ar fi fost limitate pentru cei fără studii. Aceste calificări educaționale sunt urmărite de către viitorii studenți, datorită valorii percepute și a avantajelor în ceea cea ce privește intrarea pe piața muncii. Prin urmare, participarea la educație și formare este o investiție care oferă atât beneficii sociale, cât și private, deschizându-se noi oportunități în ceea ce privește angajarea și formarea unei cariere profesionale.

Cu toate acestea, există mai multe discuții despre reducerea valorii pe piața muncii și despre necesitatea adăugării unor noi competențe și experiențe care favorizează angajarea. Studiul lui Tomlinson (2008, 59) scoate în evidență faptul că învățământul superior de masă a devenit mai accesibil și este considerat ca fiind o creștere inflaționistă a calificărilor formale. Din rezultatele studiului său reiese faptul că, odată cu creșterea numărului de absolvenți care au părăsit universitatea, specializările/calificările au fost considerate a fi accesibile și mai ușor de atins. Ca urmare a acestui fapt, studenții s-au preocupat mai mult de ceea ce au văzut ca o scădere a valorii lor simbolice, iar calificările formale nu au mai fost considerate o "insignă de distincție" pe piața forței de muncă. Cu alte cuvinte, obținerea unei diplome universitare nu mai oferă siguranță obținerii unui loc de muncă. Rezultatele studiului său au scos la iveală o preocupare în rândul studenților cu privire la necesitatea de a adăuga valoare propriei capacitați de angajare, pentru a se putea diferenția de alții absolvenți cu profiluri și realizări similare.

În concluzie, angajabilitatea devine un proces (Holmes, 2013, 548) care se extinde dincolo de obținerea unei calificări și a diplomei universitare. Instituțiile de învățământ superior nu pot decât să își îndeplinească rolul, acela de a oferi experiențe și oportunități de învățare teoretice și practice, pentru a încuraja și a permite absolvenților să devină angajați (Harvey, 2001, 99). De asemenea, Holmes (2013, 540) atrage atenția asupra faptului că instituțiile de învățământ superior, nu controlează ele însăși piața muncii și nu pot garanta rezultatele ocupării forței de muncă. Prin urmare, angajabilitatea este dependentă de traectoriile absolvenților și într-o oarecare măsură modelată de propriile inițiative în ceea ce privește adunarea experiențelor relevante pentru angajarea lor și diferențierea de alți candidați. Studenții pot dobândi un avantaj în poziționarea pe piața muncii, prin activitățile care completează studiile absolvite și prin îmbunătățirea proactivă a CV-ului personal (Sin, 2016, 5).

Piața muncii și dobândirea avantajului competitiv pentru angajare

Angajabilitatea este determinată și influențată de atributele individului articulate în cunoștințe, experiență, abilități și trăsături de personalitate; de programa și pedagogia sistemului universitar; dar și de așteptările acestor angajatori care angajează absolvenți nou calificați (Sumanasiri et al., 2015, 85). Un factor cheie în conturarea angajabilității absolvenților este reprezentat de angajatori și de așteptările acestora de la absolvenții nou calificați.

Studiul demarat de către Brown și Hesketh (2004), privind recrutarea absolvenților, demonstrează că angajatorii oferă o importanță scăzută acreditărilor academice, și o mai mare importanță este acordată atributelor și abilităților personale. Absolvenții pot fi apreciați pentru abilitățile lor cognitive și cunoștințele academice, însă acest lucru reprezintă doar un prag standard pe care îl bifează. Angajatorii văd diploma ca pe un mijloc în obținerea unui anumit nivel de abilități și competențe, dar care reprezintă doar standardul minim în vederea recrutării candidaților (Lowden, Hall, Elliot & Lewin, 2011, 5).

Prin urmare, angajatorii definesc din ce în ce mai mult angajabilitatea în jurul noțiunii de capacitate a absolvenților de a demonstra și desfășura o gamă mai largă de abilități personale, de auto-eficacitate și organizaționale. Rapoartele angajatorilor evidențiază din ce în ce mai mult necesitatea de absolvenți flexibili, adaptabili, care îmbrățișează noile tehnologii și care își pot transfera abilitățile în diverse contexte (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020, 2). Acest lucru poate reflecta cerințele organizaționale aflate în schimbare ale multor angajatori, dar poate reprezenta și un mijloc de legitimare a deciziilor de recrutare atunci când un număr mare de absolvenți cu profil educațional similar concurează pentru o aceeași locuri de muncă (Tomlinson, 2008). În acest fel, angajatorii reușesc să facă o „apreciere holistică a atributelor și a personalității individului” în ceea ce privește angajarea acestuia (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006 apud Sin, 2016, 5). În consecință, Harvey precizează că relația dintre oportunitățile de dezvoltare oferite de instituțiile de învățământ superior și angajarea absolvenților este complicată de rolul jucat de angajatori care „convertesc ocuparea forței de muncă” (2001, 102).

Conform lui Knight și Yorke (2002), conceptul de angajabilitate cuprinde mai mult decât abilități teoretice și practice, astfel se aduce în discuție un set nou de competențe generice care se mai numesc și competențe transferabile/transversale sau transdisciplinare (Deeley, 2014, 41). Acest set de competențe specifice angajabilității constau în: imaginație/creativitate; adaptabilitate/flexibilitate, dorința de a învăța; munca independentă/autonomie; munca în echipă; capacitatea de a gestiona pe alții; abilitatea de a lucra sub presiune; buna comunicare orală; comunicarea în scris pentru diverse scopuri/audiențe; numerație; atenție la detaliu; abilitatea de gestionare a timpului; asumarea responsabilității și luarea deciziilor; planificare, coordonare și organizare; capacitatea de a utiliza noile tehnologii (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007, 282).

Datorită faptului că valoarea acreditărilor formale scade, diplomele universitare nu mai sunt suficiente, iar angajatorii urmăresc atât competențe profesionale, cât și o gamă mai largă de competențe transferabile. Asfel, se impune să discutăm despre modurilor în care studenții pot obține un „avantaj în poziționarea pe piața muncii” (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2020, 6).

Există multe evidențe în ceea ce privește faptul că studenții care au lucrat în timpul facultății fie în locuri de muncă cu program part-time, fie au participat la activități de voluntariat, sau au participat la activități școlare, vor avea șanse mai mari de a fi angajați după absolvire (Butum et al., 2015, 435). De asemenea, din studiul lui Purcell et al., (2005) a reieșit că studenții care dobândesc experiență de muncă, sau alte forme de activitate adevărate în afara universității, dar care au legătură cu domeniul de studiu, sunt susceptibili să obțină un loc de muncă mai devreme decât absolvenții care nu fac acest lucru (Matthews, 2009, 151).

Prin urmare, voluntariatul face parte din categoria activitatilor extra-curriculare si poate fi văzut ca un bagaj de experiențe și oportunități care poate fi asimilat experienței profesionale. Prin desfășurarea activităților de voluntariat în domeniul studiat se dobândesc experiențe profesionale relevante pentru angajarea în acel domeniu. De asemenea, se achiziționează și competențe mai generice de tip "soft skills" care sunt necesare în toate domeniile de activitate.

Lowden et al., (2011, 14), subliniază faptul că absolvenții au tendința de a valorifica experiențele extra-curriculare la universitate și experiența de muncă mai mult decât conținutul diplomelor (cu excepția domeniilor specializate), aceste experiențe fiind văzute importante de adăugat la CV și contribuind la asigurarea unui loc de muncă. Cercetările care au vizat activitățile de voluntariat s-au axat pe motivațiile din spatele alegerii studenților de a se angaja în activitățile de voluntariat, pe angajamentul față de voluntariat, beneficiile personale, cum ar fi progresul în carieră și pe capacitatea de angajare (Barton, Bates & O'Donovan, 2017, 2).

În ceea ce privește motivațiile studenților de a face voluntariat, Finkelstien (2009) aduce în discuție două tipuri de motivații: intrinsecă și extrinsecă. Motivația intrinsecă a fost asociată pozitiv cu conceptul de voluntariat internalizat, personalitate prosocială și timp pentru desfășurarea activităților voluntare. În contrast, orientarea extrinsecă a fost mai strâns asociată cu motive externe precum aspirațiile privind dezvoltarea unei cariere și adunarea experiențelor semnificative care aduc plus-valoare propriei capacitați de angajare.

Pornind de la orientarea extrinsecă, voluntariatul reprezintă o oportunitate de a dobândi abilități și experiențe organizaționale, sporind capitalul uman prin dobândirea experienței relevante pentru angajare și a capitalului social (Smith, 2010). Conform unui studiu derulat în rândul studenților și absolvenților de la psihologie, dintr-o universitate din Marea Britanie, a reieșit faptul că activitățile de voluntariat sporesc încrederea în dezvoltarea carierei și abilitățile de angajare pe care angajatorii le caută în rândul candidaților. De asemenea, participanții la studiu au simțit că au beneficiat din punct de vedere social, și-au extins rețeaua socială și au raportat cum s-au simțit și dezvoltat ca indivizi, obținând în acest fel abilități generice/transferabile (Barton et al., 2017). Implicarea în activitățile de voluntariat reprezintă o măsură proactivă de dezvoltare a capitalului uman prin intermediul experiențelor profesionale dobândite, dar și o măsură de dezvoltare a capitalului social care reprezintă suma resurselor relaționale care pot influența angajarea, potrivirea și asumarea locului de muncă.

În concluzie, experiențele de voluntariat și implicarea în planificarea dezvoltării personale, ar conduce la formarea unor studenți mai ocupabili, dar și mai conștienți de abilitățile și capacitatea lor de angajare. Acest aspect este deosebit de important în auto-prezentarea absolvenților ca resursă umană valoroasă în cadrul unei instituții angajatoare.

Concluzii

Scopul acestui articol a fost de a prezenta mai multe perspective asupra conceptului de angajabilitate în rândul absolvenților de studii superioare și de a scoate în evidență importanța aptitudinilor personale și a competențelor transversale pentru intrarea pe piața muncii.

Literatura de specialitate și cercetările din domeniu ne arată faptul că nu mai este suficient ca absolvenții de studii superioare să dețină o diplomă și să semnalizeze prin intermediul acestia, competența necesară pentru un loc de muncă. Universitățile nu pot garanta angajarea ulterioră a absolvenților după finalizarea programului de studiu, ci pot doar să își exercite rolul de a forma profesioniști cât mai competenți pentru intrarea pe piața muncii. Absolvenții au nevoie pe lângă competențele profesionale formate în universitate și de o gamă mai largă de competențe transferabile (precum adaptabilitate, flexibilitate, capacitatea de a se adapta noilor tehnologii) în diverse contexte. Deținerea acestor competențe de tip „soft

skills", îi ajută pe absolvenți să se diferențieze în procesul de recrutare pentru un loc de muncă, realizându-se o evaluare globală asupra personalității unui candidat.

Un avantaj la angajare este reprezentat de experiența în muncă, dar și de implicarea în activități extra-curriculare precum activitățile de voluntariat, deoarece implicarea în astfel de acțiuni denotă proactivitate, simț civic și chiar responsabilitate în dezvoltarea propriei cariere profesionale. Practic, prin intermediul activităților de voluntariat, studenții reușesc să intre în contact cu mai multe culturi organizaționale la care trebuie să adapteze și să își asume responsabilități, într-un mod voluntar. De asemenea, activitățile de voluntariat desfășurate în domeniul studiat, reprezintă reale oportunități de a transpune cunoștințele teoretice în situații practice, iar în acest fel studenții își pot forma competențe profesionale și pot aduna experiență relevante pentru domeniul în care s-au format și își doresc în continuare să profeseze. Tot prin intermediul voluntariatului, studenții au posibilitatea de a-și extinde rețeaua socială.

În concluzie, pornind de la literatura de specialitate prezentată în acest articol, se deschid noi oportunități de cercetare cu privire la politicile educaționale, competențele formate în mediul universitar, colaborarea facultăților cu piața muncii din România și percepția studenților cu privirea la intrarea pe piața muncii după finalizarea studiilor. Pornind de la ideea că percepția pozitivă pe care un individ o creează asupra propriei sale angajabilități duce la strategii și comportamente care vor păstra progresul și vor îmbunătăți șansele de angajare, o direcție de cercetare poate consta în determinarea angajabilității auto-percepute a studenților de la specializarea Asistență Socială, după parcursul celor 3 ani de studiu.

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THE EFFECT OF ROLE TRANSITIONS ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF ROMANIAN EMERGING ADULTS

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Abstract. *Mental health is a very important aspect of the transition of young people to adulthood. In today's highly industrialized, post-industrialized, or knowledge societies, more and more young people are achieving role transitions to maturity later on. This article analyzes the extent to which leaving the parental home, employment, involvement in romantic relationships, marriage and parenting that Romanian emerging adults fulfill, later on, have repercussions on mental health. The factors of mental health that this article looked at in the case of young people who are going through the period towards maturity are self-esteem, optimism, anxiety and depression. The data come from a group of 854 young people ($M=25.07$ years, $SD=0.46$), who completed an online questionnaire on various aspects of their transition to maturity. Most of the young people in this sample, 67.1% left the parental "nest", 87.6% are employed, 60.2% are involved in a romantic relationship, 21.9% are married and 11.8% are parents. Romanian emerging adults involved in romantic relationships and those who are married are less depressed and have better self-esteem compared to those who are not in a romantic relationship and/or married. Those who have a job have better self-esteem and less anxiety compared to those who do not work.*

Keywords: Romanian emerging adulthood; mental health; role transitions; self-esteem; anxiety.

Introduction

Emerging adulthood, the stage of life between 18 and 29 years, is a phase of development in which young people feel that they are no longer adolescents but are not yet fully independent adults and they are in a phase of transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2016). Taking on responsibilities, making independent decisions, completing college, getting a job, achieving financial and residential freedom, finding a mate, and starting a family is all part of this time of life that is full of uncertainty and ambiguity. Like adolescence, emerging adulthood is a period of the life course that is culturally constructed, not universal and immutable. This stage has emerged in some industrialized societies in which relevant social and economic changes have taken place (Arnett 2014). In previous Romanian research on youth (Raiu & Roth, 2013 and Raiu; Roth; Hărăguş, 2014) was demonstrated that this period of life is also characteristic of young Romanians. In comparison to the past, when adult status was achieved in a relatively short period of time at the end of adolescence, following graduation from the university, employment, and the building of a new family, a new life stage has emerged, during which individuals remain for an extended period in a vague socioeconomic class, lacking the autonomy and responsibilities of adults. Emerging adults needed to adapt to the

new environment, a new set of friends, a new intimate boy-or girlfriend, and new rules and regulations from the new setting. The relationship between life satisfaction and the characteristics of the emerging adult period was tested in a Romania study which showed that high-school students are rather satisfied with their lives when they explore their identities very little, though they feel quite strongly “in-between” adolescence and adulthood, and are very self-focused and for university students increased satisfaction with life was significantly predicted by high experimentation/perception of possibilities, low negativity/instability, high self and other focus and vice versa (Negru, 2012).

Transition to adulthood has become longer, and in developed countries happens later in life than previously, as measured by the timing of traditional markers such as the entry to stable work, marriage, and parenthood. Specialty literature identifies three models of transition to adulthood: the Nordic model, the British model, and the Mediterranean model. The Nordic model is characterized by a long interim period between moving out of one's parental home and starting a family. Young people leave the parental home on average between 21 (women) and 26 years of age (men), and the first marriage takes place from 6 to 8 years later (Buhl and Lanz, 2007). The British model is marked by premature separation from the family of origin and early marriage, but a postponed choice of parenting, so that couples remain childless for a long time. Finally, in Mediterranean areas, many youths live with their parents, either full time or part-time, until their late 20s or even 30s. The definitive departure of young people tends to coincide with marriage and finding a stable job (Smorti et al., 2019).

Data from the Romanian National Institute of Statistics (RNIS) show that in the last 30 years in Romania, the average age at first marriage has increased from 25 years in 1990 to 31.9 years in 2018 for boys and from 22 years in 1990 at 28.7 years in 2018 in the case of girls. The average age of the mother at the first birth in Romania reached 27.4 years in 2018, increasing by almost 5 years compared to 1990. The average age of young people leaving the parental home in Romania is 30.5 years for boys and 25.6 years in the case of girls (RNIS, 2020). Because marriage and parenthood are delayed until the mid-twenties or late twenties for most people, it is no longer normative for the late teens and early twenties to be a time of entering and settling into long-term adult roles.

In recent years, more and more researchers have begun testing the relationship between emerging adulthood and mental health. Several authors have questioned whether gaining independence later in the case of young people by leaving the parental home, marrying, becoming a parent and gaining financial independence later, has repercussions on young people's mental health and negative evaluation aspects of one's life. This article looks at the psychological factors such as self-esteem, optimism, anxiety, and depressive symptoms of a group of 854 emerging adults in Romania to see if making early or not role transitions has any effect on how they feel mentally. Mental health is a very important aspect of the transition of young people to adulthood. Mental health affects the way people think, work, make decisions, cope with life's stressful challenges and situations, and it affects happiness and well-being and even health. Mental health also influences relationships with family and friends, the self-image and future image of emerging adults, and the choices they make about risky behaviors, such as alcohol, tobacco, or drug consumption. Mental health problems that occur in adolescence are at high risk of continuing in the transition to adulthood and even into adulthood. In the World Health Organization definition, mental health is not only an absence

of negative symptoms, such as depression or anxiety but also includes aspects related to happiness, social involvement, self-esteem, and sociability. The present study used some of these indicators to assess the mental health of Romanian emerging adults.

Literature review

The article appeals to the life course perspective, the predominant theoretical orientation in the study of life. Study of the life course and longitudinal research has become a central part of modern sociology and other disciplines. The life course as a theoretical orientation came from the desire to understand social pathways, their developmental effects, and their relation to personal and social-historical conditions. Transitions early and later in life may have lifelong implications for trajectories, by shaping later events, experiences, and transitions. New thinking about the meaning of aging has corrected aging research by focusing on the link between age and time. Birth year locates people in historical context and age places them in a particular stage of life, while age also indicates the timing of lives and documents whether an event or transition occurs relatively early or late (Mortimer & Shanahan, 2003: 13-14). Trajectories refer to long-term involvement in or connection to social institutions and corresponding roles and transitions refer to specific events that move an individual into or out of various institutional contexts and corresponding role configurations (Mortimer & Shanahan, 2003: 531). Information on the timing of such transitions in individual lives allows social scientists to consider the degree to which trajectories and transitions correspond or deviate from social expectations and whether this is consequential for life chances. An individual's life course involves the interplay among multiple trajectories and transitions and the variable ways in which these interconnected trajectories unfold in concert over time. Life-course trajectories are interdependent phenomena, with each trajectory in part influenced by the shape of other trajectories.

Another theory used in the article to analyze and interpret the data refers to emerging adulthood theory. According to the emerging adulthood theory (Arnett, 2000) transition to adulthood represents an important developmental phase during which young adults must make significant life decisions about housing, employment, career, marriage, and new social networks. Emerging adulthood represents a time in which most individuals leave their parent's/guardian's care, attend college, get married, have kids, gain financial independence, begin a long-term career, and/or make their own important life decisions. But, today young people need more time to make these role transitions because they want to explore their identities and future possibilities. For today's young people, maturity does not mean taking the step towards certain roles such as parenting, getting married, or assuming an independent life by leaving the parental home. In a variety of studies with young people, demographic transitions such as finishing education, settling into a career, marriage, and parenthood rank at the bottom in importance among possible criteria considered necessary for the attainment of adulthood. The criteria by which young people define the transition to maturity refer to qualities of character that are obtained gradually, are intangible and difficult to assess explicitly and expressly such as accepting responsibility for one's self and making independent decisions. These are processes that are obtained over a long period. Also Arnett (2014) proposed five features as distinct (although not unique) to emerging adulthood: identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and possibilities or optimism.

And these characteristics can also have effects on mental health. Feeling in-between, for example, may cause despair and anxiety in some emerging adults, particularly those who think they should be more mature at their current age than they are. Anxiety disorders and mood disorders are prevalent during the emerging adult years. More generally, feeling anxious or depressed is common during emerging adulthood (Arnett et al., 2014).

Reflecting a core principle of the life course perspective, biographical and historical timing appears to have mattered for the mental health outcomes. According to several researchers, home autonomy has an impact on life satisfaction, while other authors have shown that it has no immediate effect. Some researchers found that girls who moved from their parent's homes to independent living reported better levels of mental health, life satisfaction, and lower levels of stress compared to young women who lived independently but moved again in the parental home and those who have never left the parental home (Bell and Lee, 2006; Lee and Gramotnev, 2007). Youths who face the responsibilities of adult life and are residentially and economically independent and have job stability do not perceive high levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction (Smorti; Ponti & Cincidda, 2019). For some emerging adults, leaving the parental home and entering into a romantic relationship can be events that trigger symptoms of depression (Kok, 2015). Qu and De Vaus (2015) showed that leaving the parental home does not lead to any immediate change in life satisfaction. Gender differences emerged four years after leaving the parental home, with women being more satisfied with life than men. Although it seems that the arrangement with life influences the satisfaction with life. Those who left the parental home to live with a partner had increased levels of satisfaction with life in the years before leaving the parental home, with satisfaction with life being higher for women than for men. On the contrary, those who left home but were left alone had already experienced a decline in life satisfaction in the years before leaving the parental home (Qu and De Vaus, 2015). Other studies have shown that leaving home is expected to have positive effects on psychological well-being. Leaving the parental home may be a way to reduce anxieties and conflict resulting from problematic family relations (Galambos et al., 2006). Leaving home is associated with improved relations with parents (Smetana, Metzger, & Campione-Barr, 2004).

Regarding the transition to work, Switek and Easterlin (2018) have found that the transition from school to work has no significant impact on life satisfaction, but Lee and Gramotnev (2007) showed greater satisfaction with life among women who made a smooth, normal transition to work compared to those who did not. Other studies have found that long-term unemployment or inaction can lead to depression (Rottinghaus et al., 2009, Saunders et al., 2000, Walker & Peterson, 2012) and anxiety (Gati et al., 2012, Gati et al., 2007, Nauta et al., 2012). Unemployment, precariousness, and insecurity can influence personal well-being and mental health problems (Van Vianen, Koen, Klehe, Nota, & Rossier, 2015). Unemployment has been associated with an increased risk of depression, especially for emerging adults who do not have strong parental support. Many emerging adults have anxiety and frustration as a consequence of underemployment and temporary contracts (Arnett et al., 2014). Extended periods of unemployment should be associated with decreases in psychological well-being. Duration of unemployment was related to the risk of psychiatric disorder even after controlling for personal and family characteristics that were associated with the likelihood of unemployment. Other research also indicates that young people's experiences of

unemployment and underemployment lead to increased depression (Dooley et al., 2000) and reduced self-esteem (Goldsmith, Veum, & Darity, 1997; Praise & Dooley, 1997). Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006 found that when emerging adults experienced more unemployment, their depression increased and self-esteem decreased. These findings are consistent with other research noting the salience of unemployment for depression and self-esteem (e.g., Dooley et al., 2000; Goldsmith et al., 1997).

In the case of young people who have left the care system and who are going through this stage of life, the adversities they have to face may have greater repercussions on their mental health (Miller, Blakeslee, Ison, 2020). Studies on the link between role transitions and life satisfaction using different models (transversal versus longitudinal studies) have shown mixed results. Some authors point out that the way in which emerging adults cope with the responsibilities of adult life and go through the tasks that they develop themselves, they perceive an increase in psychological well-being and satisfaction with life (Galambos, Barker and Krahn, 2006; Galambos and Krahn, 2008; Kins and Beyers, 2010), while others deny this connection (Qu and De Vaus, 2015; Switek and Easterlin, 2018).

Marriage is a role transition that can be associated with higher psychological well-being. (Roberts and Bengtson, 1993) found that being employed and being married buffered the negative effects of low parent-child affection on self-esteem in the adolescent and early adult years as well as on self-esteem and depression 14 years later. The transition to marriage in emerging adulthood was related to increases in psychological well-being as well as to decreases in alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine use (Bachman et al., 2002; Schulenberg et al., 2005). Lucas, et al., 2003 found an association between marriage and subjective well-being. Getting married during emerging adulthood is likely to be associated with a decrease in depression and anger and an increase in self-esteem. Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006 found that marriage was a positive turn of events associated with reduced levels of depressive symptoms. Another study found a general increase in well-being between ages 18 and 24, with well-being the highest among unmarried students who lived away from home and had no children. Whereas well-being leveled off between ages 22 and 24 for many participants, it increased across the same interval among unmarried, childless individuals still enrolled in full-time education (and not working) at age 24 (Schulenberg et al., 2005).

Methodology

Data analyzed in this article come from multiwave longitudinal studies, from a group of 854 Romanian emerging adults ($M=25.07$ years, $SD=0.46$) 61% are girls, 93.4% have finished high school in urban areas and 13.7% come from materially deprived families (see Table 1). This group of young people is part of the 3rd wave of a longitudinal study on the transition from adolescence to adulthood of young Romanians that started 8 years ago when young people were in the twelfth grade in high school. 24.3% of the young people who 8 years ago were students in the final grades of the high school answered in this 3rd wave of the study. The data collected was made between December 2019 and February 2020. The young people were contacted by phone, on the social networks Facebook and WhatsApp, and their e-mail addresses. They were asked to complete an online questionnaire on the website <https://www.viitoradult.ro/en/> with questions that capture various aspects of the transition from adolescence to adulthood such as issues related to health, education, relationship with

parents and friends, employment, risky behaviors, involvement in romantic relationships, marriage and parenting, leisure and future plans. To see if young people who have moved from their parent's home, those who work, those who are in a romantic relationship, those who are married and those who have children have higher self-esteem, are more optimistic, have a low level of anxiety and depression compared to young people who have not yet gone through these role transitions, this article compared the averages using the statistical method Independent-Samples T-Test. To see how much of the variant of mental health factors is explained by these demographic transitions, the article contains linear regression analyzes using the statistical program SPSS version 20.

Socio-demographic data of respondents between the 3 waves of the study		First wave 2012-2013		Second wave 2014-2015			Third-wave 2019-2020		
		No.	% First wave	No. ¹	% Seco nd wave	(%) ²	No. ³	% Third - wave	(%) ⁴
Gender	Girls	2043	58.2	891 (- 1152)	59.0	43.6	521 (- 1522)	61.0	25.5
	Boys	1466	41.8	618 (- 848)	41.0	42.1	333 (- 1133)	39.0	54.0
Mean age		18.00 years		20.02 years			25.07 years		
Residential Area of High School	Urban	2962	85.7	1389 (- 1573)	92.4	46.8	798 (- 2164)	93.4	26.9
	Rural	493	14.3	114 (- 379)	7.6	23.1	56 (- 437)	6.6	49.1
Material deprived family		610	19.5	236 (- 374)	16.6	38.6	117 (- 493)	13.7	19.2
Total		3509		1509		43.0	854		24.3
						56.6			

Table 1. The socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Source: Author's own conception

¹no. of young people from the second wave, less than in the first wave of the study

²percent of the young people from the total initial sample who submitted the questionnaire in the second wave

³no. of young people from the third wave less than in the first and second wave of the study

⁴percent of the young people **from the total initial samples that** submitted the questionnaire in the third wave

⁵percent of the young people **from the second wave** who submitted the questionnaire in the third wave

Results and discussions

We looked at whether in the case of Romanian emerging adults, role transitions (moving from the parental home (leaving the "nest"), employment, involvement in a romantic relationship, marriage, parenting) have any influence on their mental health. Regarding marital status, 21.9% are married, the average age of marriage is 23.42 years and 60.2% are in a romantic

relationship. Out of the total number of young people, 11.8% have children. Most of the young people in our group live with their parents 27.9%, followed by those who live with their partner 25.5%, those who live with their spouse 20.0% and those who live alone 16.4%. Girls left the parental home more 72.0% compared to boys 59.5% of them ($hi^2 = 14.41$; $df=1$; $N=854$; $p<0.05$). Boys are employed, in a higher proportion 91.5% compared to 85.2% of girls ($hi^2 = 7.50$; $df=1$; $N=849$; $p=<0.05$). Girls are more involved in a romantic relationship 66.5% compared to 52.2% of boys who say they have a girlfriend ($hi^2 = 13.89$; $df=1$; $N=663$; $p<0.05$). Among those married, the proportion of married girls is 28.8% higher compared to 11.1% of boys who say they are in a formal relationship with the marital status ($hi^2 = 37.06$; $df=1$; $N=852$; $p<0.05$). In our group, more girls say they are mothers, 16.2% compared to 4.8% of boys who say they are parents ($hi^2 = 25.54$; $df=1$; $N=850$; <0.05) (See Table 2).

Role transitions to maturity											
		Leaving the parental home		Employment		Involvement in a romantic relationship		Married		Becoming a parent	
Gender		Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Yes	N	375	198	442	302	246	153	150	37	84	16
	%	72.0	59.5	85.2	91.5	66.5	52.2	28.8	11.1	16.2	4.8
No	N	146	135	77	28	124	140	370	295	433	317
	%	28.0	40.5	14.8	8.5	33.5	47.8	71.2	88.9	83.8	95.2

Table 2. Frequency of role transitions and gender comparison

Source: Author's own conception

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Depression	1.00	4.00	1.45	0.47
Self-esteem	1.00	3.00	2.68	0.39
Anxiety	1.00	4.00	1.74	0.63
Optimism	1.00	5.00	3.41	0.60

Table 3. The averages and standard deviations of the study variables

Source: Author's own conception

Most young people in our sample have a perception of their own health as very good 36.6% and good 29.8%. However, 19.3% of them say they have some problems, but not serious ones. Most of the 93.1% do not have any chronic illness, but 6.9% say they have a chronic illness that does not heal or is difficult to heal or they have a disability that prevents them from being active.

Regarding the depression factor evaluated with the short version of the BDI Depression Scale (Kopp and Foris, 1993), a significant percentage of emerging Romanian adults say they are too tired to do anything 14.0% and also a significant percentage say they have lost interest in others 13.3%.

Regarding the scale of items that measure self-esteem evaluated with the Rosenberg scale, Rosenberg, 1975, most of the young people 84.5% say that they can do things as well as most, 75.9% say that they have many qualities and 70% that they trust them themselves.

Optimism was assessed with the LOT-R Optimism Scale (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994). Regarding the scale that measures optimism, a significant percentage of Romanian emerging adults 24.6% say they are always optimistic about their future and 13.2% say it is important for them to be busy all the time.

Table 4. Average comparisons for the depression variable according to role transition

Rol transitions		M	SD	t	p
Employment	Not working	17.65	18.81	1.51	NS
	Working	15.02	15.29		
Involvement in a romantic relationship	Single	17.66	17.18	1.97	< .005
	In a relationship	15.00	15.94		
Marital status	Unmarried	16.08	16.46	2.44	< .005
	Married	12.83	12.70		
Becoming a parent	Don't have children	15.56	15.80	1.29	NS
	Have children	13.29	15.34		
Leaving the parental home	No	15.51	16.32	0.23	NS
	Yes	15.24	15.47		

Source: Author's own conception

Rol transitions		M	SD	t	p
Employment	Not working	80.38	24.36	-	<
	Working	84.99	18.90		
Involvement in a romantic relationship	Single	81.15	21.47	-	<
	In a relationship	85.09	19.18		
Marital status	Unmarried	83.53	20.19	2.38	.005
	Married	87.47	17.26		
Becoming a parent	Don't have children	83.99	19.71	1.72	NS
	Have children	87.78	18.88		
Leaving the parental home	No	85.34	18.35	0.90	NS
	Yes	84.01	20.22		

Table 5. Average comparisons for the self-esteem variable according to role transition

Source: Author's own conception

Rol transitions		M	SD	t	p
Employment	Not working	29.94	23.74	2.55	< .005
	Working	23.98	20.85		
Involvement in a romantic relationship	Single	24.66	20.78	0.29	NS
	In a relationship	24.26	21.10		
Marital status	Unmarried	24.34	20.94	-0.94	NS
	Married	26.04	22.45		
Becoming a parent	Don't have children	24.44	20.78	-0.76	NS
	Have children	26.26	24.88		
Leaving the parental home	No	26.18	23.00	1.39	NS
	Yes	23.94	20.37		

Table 6. Average comparisons for the anxiety variable according to role transition
Source: Author's own conception

Rol transitions		M	SD	t	p
Employment	Not working	58.72	16.22	-1.03	NS
	Working	60.46	14.90		
Involvement in a romantic relationship	Single	59.12	15.86	-1.19	NS
	In a relationship	60.63	15.05		
Marital status	Unmarried	60.02	15.37	-0.64	NS
	Married	60.85	13.58		
Becoming a parent	Don't have children	60.39	15.19	0.66	NS
	Have children	59.25	13.77		
Leaving the parental home	No	61.33	15.15	1.39	NS
	Yes	59.74	14.97		

Table 7. Average comparisons for the optimism variable according to role transition
Source: Author's own conception

Emerging adults who are not in a romantic relationship ($M = 17.66$, $SD = 17.18$), $t = 1.97$, $p < .005$ and those who are not married ($M = 16.08$, $SD = 16.46$), $t = 2.44$, $p < .005$ reported symptoms of depression to a greater extent compared to young people who are in a romantic relationship ($M = 15.00$, $SD = 15.94$) and those who are married ($M = 12.83$, $SD = 12.70$). Those who do not work, those who do not have children and those who have not yet left their parental home have reported on average symptoms of depression, to a greater extent, compared to emerging adults who work, who have children and who have left their parent's house, but the differences are not statistically significant (see Table 4).

Young people, who work ($M = 84.99$, $SD = 18.90$), $t = -2.13$, $p < .005$, those who are in a romantic relationship ($M = 85.09$, $SD = 19.18$), $t = -2.38$, $p < .005$ reports on average statistically significantly better self-esteem compared to young people who do not work ($M = 80.38$, $SD = 24.36$), are not in a romantic relationship ($M = 81.15$, $SD = 21.47$) or are not

married ($M = 83.53$, $SD = 20.19$). Emerging adults who have children and those who have not left the parental home have better self-esteem compared to those who do not have children and those who have left the parental home, but the differences are not statistically significant (see Table 5).

It presents more accentuated symptoms of anxiety, emerging adults who do not work ($M = 29.94$, $SD = 23.74$), $t = 2.55$, $p <.005$ compared to those who work ($M = 23.98$, $SD = 20.85$), the difference between the 2 categories of young people in terms of employment being statistically significant. More pronounced symptoms of anxiety also show young people who do not have a romantic relationship and those who have not left the parental home compared to young people who are in a relationship and those who have left their hometown house, but the differences are not statistically significant. Also, emerging adults, married and those with children report more anxiety symptoms compared to young people who are not married and do not have children, but the differences between them are not significant (see Table 6).

Regarding the effect of role transitions on the optimism of emerging adults, no significant differences were identified of those who make these transitions compared to those who do not go through them. However, emerging adults who work, those who are in a romantic relationship, those who are married, those who do not have children and those who still live with their parents seem to be more optimistic compared to young people who do not work, those who are not in a romantic relationship or unmarried, have children and left the parental home, but the differences in score are not significant (see Table 7).

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	Er. Std.	Sig.	B	Er. Std.	Sig.
(Constant)		31.031	0.027		31.184	0.019
Gender (0=Girls)	-0.020	1.168	0.588	-0.034	1.202	0.357
Material deprived family (0=No)	0.033	1.621	0.368	0.040	1.626	0.276
Age	-0.062	1.242	0.090	-0.062	1.242	0.087
Occupational status (0=without a job)	-	-	-	-0.061	1.764	0.097
Marital status (0=unmarried)	-	-	-	-0.093	1.730	0.042
Parenting (0=without kids)	-	-	-	-0.012	2.218	0.788
Leaving the parental home (0=lives with parents)	-	-	-	0.006	1.241	0.882
N	768			768		
R ²	0.005			0.018		
Adjusted R Square	0.001			0.009		
Sig. R ² Change	0.005			0.012		

Table 8. Linear (hierarchical) regression analysis for depression

Source: Author's own conception

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	Er. Std.	Sig.	B	Er. Std.	Sig.
(Constant)		38.810	0.002		38.869	0.003
Gender (0=Girls)	0.043	1.461	0.241	0.054	1.498	0.151
Material deprived family (0=No)	-0.049	2.028	0.178	-0.056	2.026	0.125
Age	-0.034	1.553	0.345	-0.034	1.548	0.343
Occupational status (0=without a job)	-	-	-	0.086	2.199	0.020
Marital status (0=unmarried)	-	-	-	0.089	2.156	0.050
Parenting (0=without kids)	-	-	-	0.043	2.764	0.349
Leaving the parental home (0=lives with parents)	-	-	-	-0.052	1.546	0.161
N	762			762		
R ²	0.006			0.025		
Adjusted R Square	0.002			0.016		
Sig. R ² Change	0.006			0.019		

Table 9. Linear (hierarchical) regression analysis for self-esteem

Source: Author's own conception

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	Er. Std.	Sig.	B	Er. Std.	Sig.
(Constant)		41.493	0.012		41.718	0.004
Gender (0=Girls)	-0.154	1.562	0.000	-0.155	1.608	0.000
Material deprived family (0=No)	0.036	2.168	0.318	0.040	2.175	0.260
Age	-0.061	1.660	0.089	-0.069	1.661	0.054
Occupational status (0=without a job)	-	-	-	-0.074	2.360	0.043
Marital status (0=unmarried)	-	-	-	0.019	2.314	0.665
Parenting (0=without kids)	-	-	-	-0.021	2.967	0.639
Leaving the parental home (0=lives with parents)	-	-	-	-0.070	1.660	0.058
N	765			765		
R ²	0.030			0.041		
Adjusted R Square	0.026			0.032		
Sig. R ² Change	0.030			0.011		

Table 10. Linear (hierarchical) regression analysis for anxiety

Source: Author's own conception

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	Er. Std.	Sig.	B	Er. Std.	Sig.
(Constant)		29.913	0.302		30.155	0.280
Gender (0=Girls)	0.038	1.126	0.300	0.035	1.162	0.358
Material deprived family (0=No)	-0.030	1.563	0.419	-0.027	1.572	0.468
Age	0.034	1.197	0.352	0.031	1.201	0.394
Occupational status (0=without a job)	-	-	-	0.037	1.706	0.322
Marital status (0=unmarried)	-	-	-	0.069	1.673	0.132
Parenting (0=without kids)	-	-	-	-0.044	2.144	0.341
Leaving the parental home (0=lives with parents)	-	-	-	-0.053	1.200	0.159
N	755			755		
R ²	0.004			0.010		
Adjusted R Square	0.000			0.001		
Sig. R ² Change	0.004			0.006		

Table 11. Linear (hierarchical) regression analysis for optimism

Source: Author's own conception

In order to see the effect of demographic transitions on aspects related to mental health, were introduced in turn with socio-demographic variables such as gender, family economic situation and age, the five role transitions. The models have little explanatory power on the variance of each of the mental health factors introduced in turn in the regression analyzes. In the case of linear (hierarchical) regression analysis for depression, the model explains 0.9% from the variance of anxiety. The only variable introduced in the model that has a statistically significant influence on young people's anxiety is marital status. Emerging adults who are not married are more anxious compared to those who are married (see Table 8). The explanatory power of the regression analysis model for self-esteem is somewhat greater. The variables introduced in the model explain 1.6% of the variance of self-esteem. Occupational status ($B=0.086$, $p<0.005$) and marital status ($B=0.089$, $p<0.005$) are demographic transitions that have a statistically significant influence on the self-esteem of emerging adults (Table 9). In Table 10, the same explanatory variables were introduced in two models of hierarchical linear regression, and the explanatory power of the second model increases from 2.6% (R^2 Adjusted=0.026) to 3.2% (R^2 Adjusted=0.036) to explain young people's anxiety. The variables with significant effect on young people's anxiety in model 2 are gender ($B = -0.155$; $p <0.0001$) and occupational status ($B = -0.074$; $p <0.05$). Emerging girls and adults who do not have a job are perceived to be more anxious compared to emerging boys and adults who are employed. None of the variables introduced in the linear regression analysis to explain the variance of optimism are statistically significant and therefore the explanatory power of the model is very small.

Conclusions

This study examined the relationship between emerging adulthood and overall happiness, specifically the impact of meeting or failing to meet the criteria for adulthood, which include being self-sufficient by getting a job, being capable of forming mature relationships, and being able to claim and care for a family, on the minds of young Romanians. Mental health is a current public health problem on emerging adults because its incidence and prevalence are constantly expanding on the majority of this group of population. This study has some limitations. Like many longitudinal studies (e.g. Barlett et al., 2018; Galambos et al., 2006) most of the emerging adults who responded in this third wave of the study are young people who are doing well, who have an easy transition to adulthood. Some young people have graduated from higher education, most of whom come from families who are not in a situation of material deprivation and who are financially independent, having a job. Emerging adulthood is not a positive experience for everyone, as there is great interindividual variability in intraindividual change. For example, individuals who come from lower SES families may have a harder time making the transition, as might those who experience losses in social support or unemployment.

Promoting mental health among young people will help them to have a smoother and more successful transition to the new stage of young adult life.

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THE ROLE OF APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS APPROACH IN INCREASING EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract. *This article addresses ways in which some strategies from Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) approach contribute to the understanding and increasing of workplace performance and motivation. In this study, we provide the conceptual background, meta-analyze available studies about behavioral approaches, applied in organizational settings, and we describe various factors that influence motivation, including individual learning histories, motivating operations and **keys for delivering positive reinforcement effectively**. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications for the practice of entrepreneurial leadership and for further research, offering practical suggestions for improving motivation and productivity in organizational settings.*

Keywords: applied behavior analysis, motivation, productivity, positive reinforcement, organizational behavior modification.

Introduction

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the science that approaches the study of human behavior and the influence of the environment on behavior and its modification. Almost half a century ago (Dollard & Miller, 1950; Skinner, 1953), behavior analysts indicated that operant and respondent principles modify human behavior in the everyday world. The focus of ABA is on those environmental events that have a direct influence upon human behavior. Behavior analysis is applied because of the commitment to contribute to improving behaviors that develop and improve people's lives.

Behavioral interventions have been implemented effectively in clinical psychology, education, medicine, counseling, employee productivity, job effectiveness, sports training, geriatrics, environmental protection and social assistance (Pierce & Cheney, 2013; Cooper, 2016). Teachers, educators, parents, coaches, supervisors at various workplaces have implemented interventions considered effective in many ABA studies.

Principles of ABA have been used to improve the performance of university students (Mayfield & Chase, 2002; Pear & Crone-Todd, 1999), increase academic skills (Eckert, Ardoine, Daly & Martens, 2002; Alavosius & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1986), teach developmentally delayed children self-care (Kissel, Whitman & Reid, 1983), reduce phobic reactions (Jones & Friman, 1999), get people to wear seat belts (Sowers-Hoag, Thyer & Bailey, 1987), prevent industrial accidents (Sulzer-Azaroff & De Santamaria, 1980), and help individuals stop cocaine abuse (Budney, Higgins, Delaney, Kent, & Bickel, 1991; Higgins & Katz, 1998; Pierce & Cheney, 2013). Therefore, this demonstrates the pragmatic nature of ABA.

Strategies based on ABA principles have been successfully used in organizational settings. A behavioral approach to motivation at work could be very different from a non-behavioral approach.

It is not enough to hire individuals with acceptable knowledge and skills, or to have a well-designed training system. The ongoing performance support, consciously organized in

the work environment is also a very important aspect. From a behavioral perspective, the solution involves additional antecedents, the manipulation of consequences and increasing employee motivation.

Theoretical framework

Organizational behavior modification

Organizational behavior modification/management (OBM) is the application of ABA in business, industry and human services, which aims to improve people's behavior at work (Miltenberger, 2011; Luthans and Kreitner, 1985; Stajkovic and Luthans, 1997). Hall (1980) defined OBM as "the development and evaluation of performance improvement procedures which are based on the principles of behavior discovered through the science of behavior analysis", its purpose being to "establish a technology of broad-scale performance improvement and organizational change so that employees will be more productive and happy, and so that our organizations and institutions will be more effective and efficient in achieving their goals" (p. 145).

Within the organizational setting, behavior modification procedures have been used to improve motivation, job performance, self-management ability, supervisor performance, safety at work, to reduce absenteeism and tardiness and other inappropriate behaviors that affect performance and work efficiency (Miltenberger, 2011). The results of implementing behavior change procedures in organizational environments have been identified as: increasing productivity and profit for organizations and increasing job satisfaction for employees and entrepreneurs (Miltenberger, 2011).

Behavioristic approaches in organizational settings

The behavioral approach can be applied in the employee selection process, in employee training and in increasing employee motivation.

Behavioral approach to selection implies job analysis, identifying the mission and objectives pursued, then identifying the behaviors needed to successfully achieve these objectives, identifying the type of help needed and ways to reduce it, evaluating reinforcements based on the individual learning history and identifying the knowledge and skills that the candidate has (Johnson & McGee, 2015).

Employee selection, based on behavioral principles, helps to put the right people in the right place, based on their learning histories - this approach differs from a trait selection approach that is based on assessing certain personality and work traits (Johnson & McGee, 2015).

In job-specific training, a behavioristic approach makes the connection between pre-acquisitions (knowledge and skills) and the knowledge and skills required by the job. The support is gradually faded following a performance-based training approach: (1) guided observation that includes demonstration, (2) guided practice that includes "help me as I do", and (3) demonstration that includes "let me do independently" (Brethower & Smalley, 1998; Mager, 1997).

Recent research comparing a behavioral approach (which included pre- and post-training performance support and involves manipulating antecedents and consequences to support transfer) with the same training, but without additional background and consequence manipulations, has shown that the behavioral approach had better results in terms of transfer from training to practice (Kazbour et al., 2013).

Regarding to additional antecedents, some preliminary based strategies that can be efficiently applied in organizational settings are: job enrichment, empowerment and development of communication strategies.

Environments, which are more stimulating, provide higher rates of synaptogenesis and create more complex dendritic trees, which leads to increased brain activity. Job enrichment

is a strategy in which a job is designed to have interesting and challenging tasks that can increase employee productivity and motivation (Paul, Robertson & Herzberg, 1969).

Many studies that analyze the effect of job enrichment have been conducted since Walker (1950) first described the importance of enriching the environment and content of the job. Job enrichment refers to more variety, significance, identity, autonomy and feedback in a job (Oldham, Hackman & Pearce, 1976). Several studies that analyzed the effect of job enrichment reported statistically significant increases in satisfaction (Bishop & Hill, 1971; Ford, 1969). Paul et al. (1969) reported a significant increase in productivity in terms of quantity produced and Umstot, Bell and Mitchell (1976) reported that job enrichment had a major impact on satisfaction but little impact on performance. Other results show higher work quality and lower turnover and absenteeism feedback (Oldham, Hackman & Pearce, 1976).

Empowerment is also an important concept in discussing the antecedent strategies for increasing target behaviors in employees. Some researchers consider empowerment as a set of behaviors of managers that give control and authority to subordinates (Bennis, 1984; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Conger, 1989; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; DuBrin, 1998; Ford & Fottler, 1995). Other empowerment behaviors could include providing a positive emotional atmosphere, rewarding and encouraging in visible and personal ways, expressing confidence, fostering initiative and responsibility and building on success (Conger, 1989; DuBrin, 1998). Empowerment has been found to be negatively correlated with the intention to leave the organization (Koberg et al., 1999) and positively correlated with teacher commitment to schools (Wu & Short, 1996). Ford & Fottler (1995) admit that giving employees the freedom to make decisions about job content and context is the ultimate form of trust.

Employees need to be reminded and taught to communicate their needs, expectations, opinions in order to prevent and solve problems quickly, perform better, feel a greater sense of accomplishment and get along better with their manager or colleagues (Green & Knippen, 1999). A good communication with the manager is an important factor in determining success or failure at work (Green & Knippen, 1999).

Consequence's manipulation programs can be, unfortunately, improperly designed, based on punishment, avoidance and unproductive competition and not on consolidation and cooperation (Johnson & McGee, 2015). Successful use of behavioral reinforcement programs involves: correct definition of expected behaviors that are measurable, observable and repeatable, the individual preference assessment, reinforcers being measured by their effect on behavior – which increases in frequency/duration/magnitude in the future. People are different, as is the motivation of each person. Therefore, reinforcers must be individualized, for each person, based on a preference assessment. If for one person money is a reinforcer for a certain behavior, for another person the completion of a task can be a reinforcer, social attention, vacation or learning new skills can function as a reinforcer. And, finally, reinforcers must be offered contingent on target behavior (Daniels & Bailey, 2014).

The preference assessment can take many forms, including observation, experimentation with various items to determine whether they increase performance, interviews or surveys (Johnson & McGee, 2015).

The use of positive reinforcement to support performance can be as simple as encouraging employees by giving them feedback about performance and as sophisticated as comprehensive monetary and nonmonetary incentive systems (Johnson & McGee, 2015).

Critics to reinforcement or incentive systems, especially monetary systems, have argued that extrinsic reinforcers decrease intrinsic motivation (Lepper, Greene & Nisbett, 1973; Kohn, 1993; Pink, 2009). However, there are several flaws with this interpretation of this effect in many of the studies that analyze this theme, including the fact that the rewards were never tested for reinforcing properties and that the long-term detrimental effects were not documented (Cameron & Pierce, 2002). Also, the potential improvements of extrinsic rewards and their transformation over time are neglected. On the other hand, some

researches, took rewards and reward delivery procedures developed by non-behavioral researchers as a basis for criticizing behavioral techniques (Johnson & McGee, 2015).

Positive reinforcement or offering rewards at work has been challenged by some researchers. That is why it is very important to assess whether (a) the effects of the strategies used are long-term or temporary and (b) whether or not they influence intrinsic motivation (Johnson & McGee, 2015).

Johnson & McGee (2015) explained the possible effect of a reinforcement program on employee's productivity and motivation. The authors admitted that some studies demonstrate the negative effect of strategies based on positive reinforcement on employee's intrinsic motivation, but they said that if the researchers analyzed the effect of these programs over a longer period of time, they would find out that the intrinsic motivation doesn't decrease on a long-term, even if the immediate effect of stopping the positive reinforcement program is the decrease of productivity in the absence of the reinforcers. The importance of considering these issues may be illustrated with some hypothetical data in fig. 1. In baseline conditions, no additional external source of motivation is available, and in intervention condition, positive reinforcement is available.

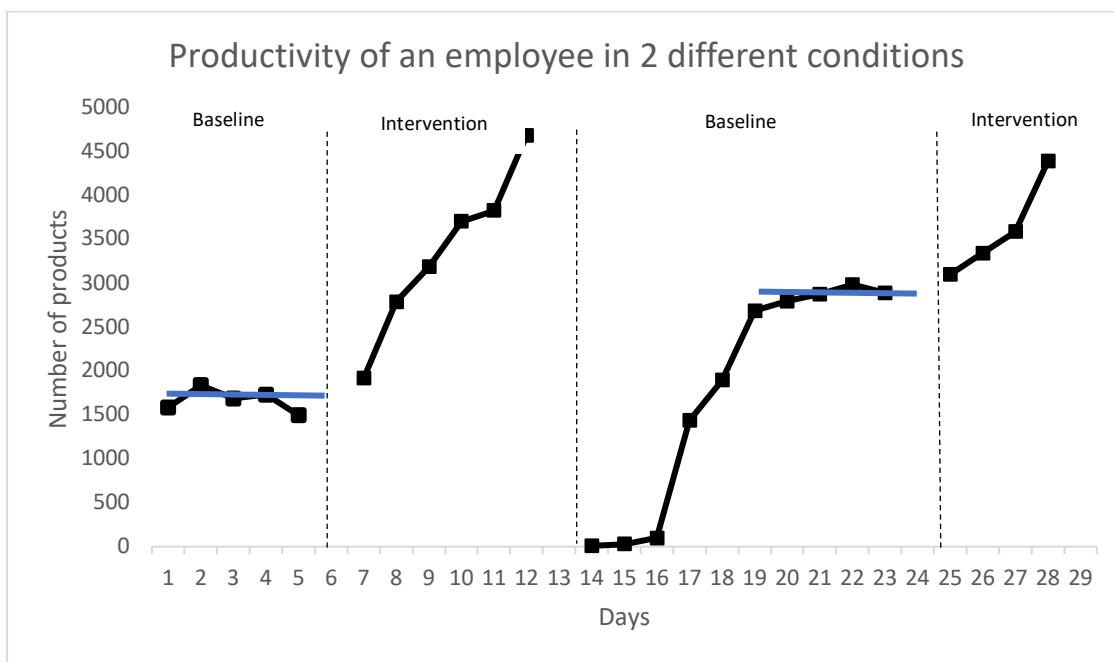


Fig.1. ABAB Design - Hypothetical data on the effect of using a reward system on employee productivity and on the baseline condition in which no external motivation system was available

Suppose that one employee is monitored over a 29-day period, with no interventions being implemented during the first 6 days - that is, behavior is motivated by intrinsic conditions. Then for days 7–12, the employee is given an extrinsic reward, such as individual monetary incentives. The following 14 – 23 days the intervention is stopped and the behavior is, again, motivated by intrinsic conditions and in the next 25-29 days the extrinsic reward is given. During these time periods the production is measured. As a result, we may discover that the performance during the second phase would increase (Johnson & McGee, 2015). After stopping the reinforcement programme, proponents of over justification theory often imply, if not directly state, that extrinsic rewards will produce a permanent loss of intrinsic motivation. Figure 1 demonstrates a temporary reduction in performance that quickly recovers and increases to a higher level by the final five days.

One hypothesis that would be interesting and useful to be tested is that the possible effect of introducing a positive reinforcement program would be not only the increasing of productivity while using positive reinforcement but also increasing productivity on a long

term, while not using positive reinforcement. Unfortunately, many studies simply report only the immediate declines or averaged performance after stopping the reinforcement program (Lepper et al., 1973, in Johnson & McGee, 2015).

Johnson and McGee (2015) would suggest that ignoring the potential improvements out of fear, due to the possible temporary reductions, would be a poor business decision, especially if there is no reason to eliminate a successful extrinsic reward system. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation could be not enough to meet the minimum demands of the business and throwing out potentially successful extrinsic rewards in favor of intrinsic motivation often lies outside a supervisor's influence (Johnson and McGee, 2015).

Most often, the problem is not with the rewards, but with how the rewards are delivered. They could have harmful effects if not delivered and transformed correctly. OBM professionals argue that consequences need to be delivered thoughtfully in order to improve performance (Johnson & McGee, 2015).

In "Bringing out the best in people", Aubrey C. Daniels (2003) highlights 5 principles for the successful application of positive reinforcement, saying that positive reinforcement is the strongest leadership strategy: (1) to make it personal - positive reinforcement must mean something for the person who receives it, (2) to offer it immediately - the longer the provider waits, the less the effect will be seen, (3) to offer it frequently - if we offer it correctly, it will never be too much, (4) to make it social - any interaction that shows the employee that he is valuable and (5) to make it earned – it has to be contingent on an achievement.

Conditioned motivating operations

To understand the behavior analytic approaches, it is very important to have some information about some complex behavioral concepts related to motivation. The most critical component in understanding the effect of the environment upon behavior are motivating operations. Motivating operations are a state of deprivation or satiation, a change or condition that (a) alters the effectiveness of reinforcement and (b) changes the likelihood of all behaviors that have produced that stimulus in the past. Motivating operations give value to an outcome and get people to involve in certain behaviors for that outcome (Johnson & McGee, 2015).

Motivating operations can be unlearned - for example thirst will make water more valuable or they can be conditioned (they have a learning history), the most common conditioned motivating operations being related to social interactions, or money. There are more types of conditioned motivating operations. Two of them will be described below in relation to organizational settings: reflexive and transitive conditioned motivating operations.

A reflexive conditioned motivating operation can be when an antecedent stimulus is associated with a threat that one person wishes to eliminate. For example, a manager may become accustomed to threat employees that he will fire them, if they do not meet certain conditions. The threat would function as a reflexive conditioned motivating operation and the employee may work harder for removing the threat.

On the other hand, a transitive conditioned motivating operation is when a stimulus has value only in the presence of another stimulus and has no value in the absence of that stimulus (Johnson & McGee, 2015). For example, a manager praises his employees based on data taken about their work. This establishes the reinforcing value of the data sheet because access to social positive reinforcement is accessible. This may produce behaviors that result in daily performance data sheets, such as increasing productivity, working harder, self-monitoring or checking data sheets. Although it was unvalued before, observing progress in one's own performance will become reinforcing.

In the first example, the reflexive conditioned motivating operation, the employees will produce only the minimal effort to avoid being fired (Daniels & Bailey, 2014). However, if the employee becomes the incumbent and the manager no longer has the authority to fire him,

motivation completely disappears. Organizations, where managers use threats exclusively for motivation, may have the majority of the employees work just hard enough to remove the current threat and the productivity won't increase. Moreover, if the threats intensify, the effects could be: aggression, behavioral contrast, revenge or resignation.

On the other hand, the transitive conditioned motivating operations have not such self-terminating future (Johnson & McGee, 2015) and may increase motivation and productivity.

Conclusion

Despite the controversial results of the studies, the behavioral approach to motivation, employee selection and training is current, relevant, and much more complex than is usually reported. This article only briefly summarizes some research on the role of Applied Behavior Analysis approach in increasing employee's motivation and productivity. The behavioral approach can help managers to understand motivation and act by taking it into account. It suggests that they should find ways to establish a work environment likely to increase motivation and prompt desired behaviors, as well as create reinforcement programs that are effective for the individual worker. Finally, it suggests that it is very important the way in which those consequences are delivered.

The current study is a theoretical research, a meta-analysis of studies conducted on the behavioral approach in the organizational environment. It is, therefore, necessary to formulate some hypotheses and test them in experimental research.

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SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES ON WELL-BEING

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Abstract. *The paper aims to focus on several sociological theories that are related to well-being and which we consider important for understanding the broader topic of social and emotional well-being of preadolescents. The theoretical perspectives approached are those aligned with ecological theories of human development, the new sociology of childhood, the rights-based model of child well-being, theories of economic (material) welfare and theories of family well-being. Given the notoriety of ecological theories of human development – which researchers have referred to regularly, since their inception and until now – we have made a synthesis of the main landmarks of the ecological perspective, which undoubtedly concerns the target group of this study, which is in full process of growth and development. The new sociology of childhood can be said, in short, that it appeared in the years 1980-1990 and represents the perspective which sees children as active agents, who play a major role in creating their own childhood. Also, the regulation of child well-being through normative acts has been, in recent decades, a necessity felt globally. The signing and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was a milestone in this regard. Withal, recognizing the significant role that material conditions play in the growth and good development of children and adolescents, we have chosen to include some major aspects related to economic well-being in the presentation of theories that this paper proposes. Family is, as well, one of the main factors that determine the social and emotional well-being of preadolescents. Given that, the atmosphere within the family and the relationships between its members are particularly important, we will also focus on certain perspectives on family well-being.*

Keywords: ecological theories of human development; the new sociology of childhood; the rights-based pattern of child well-being; theories of the economic (material) well-being; theories of the family well-being.

Introduction

The paper aims to focus on several sociological theories that are related to well-being and which we consider important for understanding the broader topic of social and emotional well-being of preadolescents. The theoretical perspectives approached are those aligned with ecological theories of human development, the new sociology of childhood, the rights-based model of child well-being, theories of economic (material) welfare and theories of family well-being.

Ecological theories of human development

Given the notoriety of ecological theories of human development - which researchers have referred to regularly since their inception and until now - we have made a synthesis of the main landmarks of the ecological perspective, which undoubtedly concerns even preadolescents - the target group of this study, in full process of growth and development.

Urie Bronfenbrenner was the initiator of the theory of ecological systems, being concerned with advancing an ecological approach to human development. In 1975, he

postulated that the ecological approach requires that the person, the environment, and the relationships between the two, can be conceptualized in terms of systems and subsystems within the systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1975).

In his 1979 book, Bronfenbrenner states that the ecological environment is conceived as a set of structures in which each of them is found inside the next, like "a set of Russian dolls" (p. 3). At the innermost level is the immediate frame that contains the developing person. It can be, for example, the house or the classroom. The next stage of the examination concerns the relationships established between these frameworks. Interconnections, says Bronfenbrenner, can be as decisive for development as the events that take place in a given setting. The third level of the ecological environment goes further and evokes a hypothesis according to which the development of the person is deeply influenced by the events that occur in settings, where the person is not even present (the researcher presents here data that suggest that among the strongest influences that affect the development of the toddlers in modern industrialized societies are the working conditions of parents). The striking phenomenon with regard to the framework of all three levels of the ecological environment presented above is, however, that while within any culture or subculture, the frames of a certain kind such as houses, streets or offices tend to be very similar, between cultures, they are particularly different (as if in each society or subculture, there was a model for the organization of each type of framework). In addition, the pattern may vary and the structure of the frameworks within a society can be significantly changed, producing, consequently, transformations in behavior and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The ecological approach became popular shortly after its launch so, it was used as a framework for a series of perspectives and theories. For example, in their 1979 article, Elder and Rockwell applied a life-course perspective to the study of human development in an ecological context. According to them, the life-course perspective provides a conceptual means to introduce temporal considerations and explanatory analyzes for the study of life and human development. By articulating age and time, this perspective concerns, throughout life, people in terms of career and life stage differentiated according to age (Elder & Rockwell, 1979).

In 1990, McMillan published an analysis of individual human development in terms of the ecological approach. Constantly referring to Bronfenbrenner and the principles of theory he developed, McMillan examines Bronfenbrenner's argument according to which the major influences on the development can be represented in four systems: *the microsystem* (in which immediate patterns of roles, activities and relationships are experienced), *the mesosystem* (the interrelationships between two or more frames, as experienced by the developing person), *the exosystem* (events happening in the world / outside have an impact on a developing person, even when he or she does not have an immediate involvement in these events) and *the macrosystem* (an even more significant / vast system of values, beliefs and assumptions about how the world should work).

The new sociology of childhood

The new sociology of childhood can be said, in short lines, that it appeared in the years 1980-1990 and represents that perspective that sees children as active agents who play a major role in creating their own childhood. According to King (2007), the new sociology of the childhood presents a very specific aspect of society - the division of the world into children and adults - and ignores any accounts of events that are outside this particular perspective. Among the main questions that this new approach raises are, in King's opinion, *how much can we trust the new sociological image of the child, seen as an autonomous and capable agent? And whether this new image of the child should be accepted as a scientific fact within the meaning of government directives, legislation and court decisions?* The answers are, of course, divided.

Alan Prout was one of the most important figures interested in the subject of childhood and the new sociology of childhood. The emergence of the new sociology of childhood occurred, he observes, in the midst of a change in the character of social life and in the midst of a crisis of social theory. It also appeared together with a sociological tradition and a theoretical apparatus, that had already entered a period of doubt and instability. Prout notes, at this point, that modernist social theory has never given much "space" to childhood. The sociology of childhood was therefore invested with a double responsibility: firstly, to create a place for childhood in the sociological discourse, and secondly, to confront the complexity and ambiguity of childhood as a contemporary but destabilized phenomenon. In general, however, the new sociology of childhood is only at the beginning of the second part of the attribution. In any case, two of the key elements in the new sociology of childhood - children seen as agents and the idea of childhood as a social structural form - come directly from modernist sociology in a more or less modified form, Prout mentions (2011).

Children can bring valid and important contributions to the public discourse on education and development policy, Marshall said in the opening of his 2016 article, *Lessons from the 'new' sociology of childhood: how might listening to children improve the planning of education for development?* His research has confirmed that children up to the age of six are perfectly capable of contributing with information to the political discussions that directly affect their lives. At the same time, the research reaffirms the importance of the lessons learned from the new sociology of childhood, on ethical and epistemological reasons that support the inclusion of children in public discourse and decision-making. Thus, such an inclusion of children's voices is both radical and precious (Marshall, 2016).

The rights-based pattern of child well-being

The regulation of child well-being through normative acts has been, in recent decades, a necessity felt globally. The signing and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was a milestone in this regard.

Based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Desai's book (2010) identifies, as the author herself states, the objectives of a rights-based preventive approach to childhood psychosocial well-being - this is the fulfillment of children's rights as to family care, development, participation and protection. The principles of the rights of the child, Desai continues, are identified as: (1) special concern for the dignity and best interests of the child; (2) the indivisibility and interdependence of children's rights and a holistic approach to children; (3) universality, equality, non-discrimination and the inclusion of the marginalized children among other children; (4) the state and the society are responsible for promoting the rights of the child.

Kosher, Jiang, Ben-Arieh, and Huebner (2014) argue that in recent years, increasing attention has been paid to and one has noted a public commitment to the notion of children's rights, which is best expressed in the United Nations Convention. The convention, the researchers note, sets out the conditions needed to ensure and promote the well-being of children and calls for constant monitoring of children's quality of life. The convention also emphasizes the education. For example, Article 28 provides that all children have the right to free education. The same article also states that school discipline should respect the dignity of the children, and refrain from the use of violence. Article 29 stipulates that the education of the children should develop to the maximum, the personality, the talents and the abilities of each child. In addition, the Convention not only provides for the right of children to education, but also sets standards for the promotion and fulfillment of children's well-being in the school context (school communities knowing the Convention may help to achieve these goals).

Also, regarding the school - in fact, school is, as we saw in the first chapter, one of the main factors influencing the social and emotional well-being of children, preadolescents and adolescents - we recall the contribution of Lundy and McEvoy (2009). They believe that an

explicit approach based on children's rights to service development optimizes the demands of children and increases their role as "partners". Moreover, the Convention on the Rights of the Child not only provides a framework that recognizes the fundamental rights of children to education, but also to other necessary services. Also, exceptionally in international human rights jurisprudence, the above-mentioned Convention recognizes the relative lack of power of children to influence their own lives and gives them the inalienable right to have their opinions taken seriously in all matters affecting them. (Lundy & McEvoy, 2009).

Tobin (2006) also emphasizes the need to be aware and to accept that the right to health is not a simple product that can be bought from a supermarket shelf, but a process and a universal right of all children. At the same time, it is recommended to confront the marginalization and the recognition of the rights, of the capacity and autonomy of children, as well as the acceptance of social responsibility and the division of tasks in connection with the fulfillment of these rights. Both the creation of participatory and sustainable processes and the promotion of health outcomes for all children, as imposed by the obligations voluntarily assumed by the states that have ratified the international legal instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are critical to promote the well-being of children on the basis of their rights.

Theories of the economic (material) well-being

Recognizing the significant role that the material conditions play in the growth and good development of the child and adolescent, we have chosen to include some important aspects related to the economic well-being in this paper.

Utilitarianism is a moral theory that supports those actions that promote happiness / pleasure and rejects actions that cause unhappiness or evil. A utilitarian approach, when aimed at making social, economic or political decisions, aims to improve the society (in fact, one of the maxims of utilitarianism is *as good as possible for as many people as possible*). Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill are among the famous representatives of this philosophy (Kenton, 2018).

For the utilitarians, the social welfare or the general utility represent the only ethical value, a good that must be maximized. Beginning with the latter part of the 18th century until the 20th century, the normative economics supported a hedonistic version of the utilitarianism (Riley, 2008).

Aspects of the utilitarian theory, included in the researches on economic welfare, are based on the idea of hedonism. Bound in a distinct form only in the eighteenth century, the historical background of the utilitarianism refers to the concept of hedonism, according to which the liberation from suffering by seeking, finding and capitalizing of pleasures is the ultimate goal of life. In fact, St. Augustine himself wrote about the consensus of all people on the ultimate goal, namely happiness. According to Kozlowski (2017), broadly speaking, a hedonist is someone who tries to maximize pleasure and minimize pain.

According to Easterlin (2003), the dominant economic theory leaves aside the goals and the ideals and focuses mainly on money, financial aspects, assuming that the multiplication of material goods available to someone increases the level of well-being. Also, because the classical economic theory considers individual preferences as intangible, the economic policy proposals are generally limited to manipulating the socio-economic context. Viewed in the terms of Easterlin's analysis, some of these policies, such as the measures to improve health or maintain employment, are consistent with a high level of well-being, as the author himself states.

In his work on the rewards of entrepreneurship in terms of income and economic well-being, Carter (2011) argues that a more accurate picture of the financial rewards of entrepreneurship can only be obtained by overcoming the narrow and immutable measures

of performance, taking into account the wide range of financial rewards that contribute, together and over time, to the overall economic well-being.

According to the definition of the economic well-being, higher income levels are associated with higher levels of well-being. Thus, as incomes increase, a greater number of needs is satisfied (due to increased consumption), which results in a higher level of well-being. Therefore, economists directly associate economic growth with well-being, and the success of a country and its government is generally measured by increases in per capita income (Fuentes & Rojas, 2001).

Gui and Stanca (2010) were interested in the economic side of interpersonal relationships and well-being. Thus, they both state that when the concept of social capital has entered the sphere of the economy, bringing with it a new interest in phenomena such as trust, social norms and associative activities, the literature emphasized the instrumental value of informal ties between members of the social groups to facilitate the organized action. However, they note, it has been a short time since the economy has begun to conceptualize the emotional and communicative side of human relationships, as well as the intrinsic value they have for people.

In addition, from the point of view of interpersonal relationships, the financial socialization of the family also plays an important role. This fact, although not the only factor affecting a person's lifelong financial behavior, is still an important process for the financial education of children and adolescents, although often ignored (Gudmunson & Danes, 2011).

The social relationships between people and, in particular, between those people who make up one of the primary social groups - the family - and the quality of the relationships within the family represent the subject of the next section.

Theories of the family well-being

The family is one of the main factors that determine the social and emotional well-being of preadolescents. Given that the atmosphere within the family and the relationships between its members are particularly important, in the following lines we will focus on certain perspectives on family well-being.

According to White, Klein and Martin (2015), for a theory to be about the family, it must contain at least one concept about the family. The three authors define the family as a social group that possesses certain specific features, which differentiate it from other social groups. Among the characteristic features of a family we recall the fact that its duration extends over a considerably longer period of time than most other social groups (although in some cases family relationships are not long-lasting - divorce or death may occur shortly after the marriage vows); families are also intergenerational. According to the authors, there are two types of family theories: those that are "about the family" or those that explain how families work and those that consider ideas about the family as useful explanations / information.

For the beginning, we will refer below to Bowen's perspective on the functioning of the family, which we will later complete with the perspective on the influence of chaos, of disorganization on the socio-emotional development of children.

It is difficult to imagine the study of family and family therapy without Murray Bowen. The initiator of the theory of family systems was compared to Immanuel Kant, without whom the history of modern philosophy would not be the same. Equally, Bowen's ideas were a starting point for all studies of family and family therapy (Papero, 1990).

Bowen (1966) treated the family as a system: "the family is a system in which a change in one part of the system is followed by a change in other parts of the same system" (p. 351).

Applying Bowen's theory of family systems was the topic around which Haefner's (2014) study gravitated. One of the pioneers of family therapy, Murray Bowen developed a theory of family systems beginning with the 1950s. In his paper, Haefner notes that, unlike

practitioners' nurses who care exclusively for the patient (at least initially), Bowen draws attention to the fact that other family members contribute to the emotional intensity that the individual feels. Thus, a person's emotional symptoms are an expression of the family's emotional symptoms, which are often embedded in the patterns of behavior of past generations.

Such interdependence, along with the influence that family members exert on each other, supports the choice of family as one of the main factors affecting the well-being of preadolescents.

Given the fact that this paper is concerned with the social and emotional well-being of preadolescents, and this section focuses primarily on family well-being, we will focus below on the impact of disorder, chaos on the socio-emotional well-being of children. According to Fiese and Winter (2010), chaos operates on several levels in family life. One of these is organizing time with family. The surveys, as the authors note, indicate that parents want to spend more time with their children to take care of those needs that go beyond routine physical activities (providing food, clothing, shelter), namely to strengthen relationships. Instead, when time spent with family is under pressure and overwhelming, three events occur: the daily schedule becomes chaotic, relationships are stressed and a sense of obligation is created. This is often the background of family chaos. There is also clear evidence and a consensus that chaos constantly and negatively affects children's behavior and adaptability, even more than other important factors in the healthy functioning of children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper emphasizes the versatility of sociological theories, which can be used as a framework to explain a multitude of social aspects and phenomena. The ecological theories of human development, the new sociology of childhood, the rights-based pattern of child well-being, the theories of the economic (material) well-being and the theories of the family well-being are all useful in the process of understanding better the children and adolescents around us.

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ROMA CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN ROMANIA: CASE STUDY PATA RÂT

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Abstract: Following the adoption of children's rights in 1990, Romania has taken an important step towards a modern, democratic state, in which children are protected from abuse and all conditions are ensured in terms of their safety, well-being and development in an beneficial environment. However, the granting and application of the main principles of children's rights in Romania are unevenly distributed, mostly when it comes to Roma children and children from the lower classes. Roma children from the „Pata Rât” community (Cluj-Napoca) face the same problems they had before the state's accession to these rules and principles. The present research is qualitative, and it is based on a set of semi-structured interviews (N=7) with experts who had direct contact, either with the Pata Rât community or with other Roma communities from Romania, as the problems Roma children face here are the same as in other parts of the country. Following three major directions (education, health and poverty) the present research aims to find out how the fundamental rights of children are reflected and transposed in the lives of Roma children, thus unearthing numerous problems faced by Roma children, caused by various phenomena such as racism, segregation, discrimination, antigianisms or non-state involvement.

Key words: Roma children, children's rights, Pata Rât community, discrimination, social exclusion

Introduction

The pandemic caused by the SarsCov2 virus, or as it is known by the larger population -Covid-19, has brought to light many social problems that the Romanian state is facing. In this context, for Roma children meant even higher risks of illness, poverty, social exclusion and increased likelihood of family separation, lack of access to health services, violence, neglect. Not to mention education, which has been extremely difficult for most children from poor families (UNICEF, 2020).

The qualitative study proposed by me is part of the study of children and childhood, being a contemporary social problem that so far in Romania, both experts and political actors have failed to solve. Even though attempts have been made through numerous policies and programs, issues related to the rights and protection of Roma children are still being debated. The central theme of the article is "Understanding how children's rights are reflected on Roma children in Romania" and the main research question is "by what mechanisms can the rights of Roma children in Romania be protected?". The study is based on a case study "Pata Rât Community" in Cluj-Napoca. The choice of this community is important for observing and analyzing the situation of Roma children in a marginalized community and excluded from society. It is important to mention that what is happening in Pata Rât, is happening in hundreds of other Roma communities in Romania. Children from Pata Rât face the same problems that children from marginalized ethnic communities generally face: poverty, health deficiency, and a lack of education inclusion. The main mechanisms to prevent these problems are: state involvement, the role of NGOs and school mediators.

Literature review

To understand the rights of the child, let us first clarify what it means to be a "child", in accordance with Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted on 20 November 1989 by the United Nations General Assembly. The concept of child is defined as "any human being under the age of 18, unless the law applicable to the child sets the age limit for adulthood below that age" (United Nations 1989). From this definition we can extract, first, the child is a human being who enjoys rights and dignity. Secondly, we can see what characterizes a child is his youth and vulnerability, the child being in a process of growth, a future adult, who needs different means to protect himself. The rights of the child is largely identical to those of adults, up to a point being adapted to the special needs of the child, "childhood" being the point that makes the difference between the two normative acts (Humanium, 2021).

Historians consider childhood a social construct, in his famous work Philippe Ariès, describes childhood a recently realized concept, which appeared in the last 400-600 years. In the Middle Ages, childhood was a taboo notion, it did not exist. The children were clothed and employed alike adults, and their education consisted of apprenticeship, where they worked side by side with grownups. This condition of children changed with the modern era, when the concept of "childhood" was born (Ariès, 1962). The philosophical approach of childhood is closely linked to two theories, which have played an important role in the development of children's rights. The theory of "early" or "classical liberalism" (Archard, 1993) provides a theoretical framework for the relationship between children and parents. One of the greatest English philosophers, John Locke, a supporter of natural rights, considers childhood or a state of "nonage", a state of freedom, in which children cannot perceive the meaning of the laws and thus automatically cannot contribute to the development good. In general, from this perspective, they cannot be free, children must be guided by their peers, through the concept of parental power, until they reach the age when they will have the ability to understand and respect the law, when they become free. (Locke, 1693, in Gianoutsos, 2006). The modern perspective on childhood produces in David Archard's vision the separation of children from adulthood. Children according to this theory are in opposition to adults, being deprived of certain values, such as: intellectual, self-knowledge and physical strength. Thus, unlike an adult, children are not aware of their own beliefs and needs, being unable to make important decisions about themselves. In this situation, childhood is seen as a social stage (Archard, 1993).

At the end of the twentieth century, more precisely in the 70s and early 80s, the concept of children's rights appears, which determines a gradual transition from the concept of childhood to the perception of clearly defined independent legal rights, allocated to children. During this period, two main schools of thought in the field of pedagogy and law developed, which contradict each other in terms of children's rights (Holt, 1974; Farson, 1974). The pedagogical perspective, the model of "children's liberators", supports the idea that children's rights become a reality, when children will have absolute autonomy to decide for themselves what is best for them, such as: the right to sexual freedom, the right to choose their own path, education, the right to be free from corporal punishment and the right to choose where to live (Holt, 1974; Wald, 1979). The "caretaker thesis" has its origins from classical theory and argues the opposite; children should not be given autonomy due to ensuring the excitement of their rights to adulthood. Parents / caregivers through adulthood need to support and guide them, making decisions on behalf of children that reflect not only their interests, but also those of adults who will become (Farson, 1974; Freeman, 1993). The sociological approach describes childhood, the result of a social construction. In other words, something created and defined by society. They argue that what people understand through childhood and the status of children in society is not fixed, but differs between different times, places and cultures (Ariès, 1962). Consequently, some categories of children have special

needs to be protected, their childhood is a serious one, being affected by the violation of rights in a systemic way, such children are classified as "children at risk".

In most cases, these children at risk end up being excluded from society. According to Levitas et al. (2007), social exclusion is limiting access to various resources and services, creating an unfavorable context for vulnerable communities to participate in various economic, social, cultural or political activities, thus affecting the quality of life and social inclusion. One of the causes and consequences of social exclusion is "poverty", as mentioned by Amartya Sen, who states that poverty can be understood as the inability to live a decent minimum life (Sen, 2000). For this reason, children at risk are the most vulnerable part of society, on the one hand they are at an age, at which, as a rule, they cannot make serious decisions, which can be made by responsible people, such as adults. On the other hand, this state of vulnerability is doubled by the difficulties they are affected by, such as: racism and segregation in the case of ethnic minorities or discrimination in the case of religious or gender minorities (Nazroo, 2003; Ciobanu, 2019).

Children from ethnic minority groups are disadvantaged in terms of socio-emotional status. Inequalities are the product of ethnic characteristics, such as: culture or genetic factors themselves, but also play an important factor the financial and social situation of parents (Nazroo, 1998; Zilanawala, Sacker, Nazroo, & Kelly, 2015). In general, the children's rights are violated, but a child from an ethnic minority is twice as likely to have his or her rights violated. Minority children are the children of a minority population, whose rights are often not ensured and protected by public authorities (Humanium, 2021 Minority Rights Group International, 2014). Therefore, we can say with certainty, the exercise of fundamental rights in the case of this category of children is difficult. For example, they are at a disadvantage in terms of: access to education and health, often due to the lack of birth certificates, which make it difficult for them to enroll in schools and medical institutions; and in other parts of the world, minority children are forced to fight for survival because of cultural differences and poverty, they are often subjected to inhuman and cruel acts. Thus, children in an ethnic community face three major problems: poverty, education and health. (Minority Rights Group International, 2014). Hence, in the literature, Roma children are members of one of the most disadvantaged communities and face daily discrimination and violations of human rights. They face health problems since childhood, according to UNICEF. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, infants are four times more likely than others to be born underweight (UNICEF, 2015). Another problem is the lack of birth certificates due to this fact a considerable number do not have a birth certificate, which automatically aggravates their enrollment in school, doctor or other institutions that require this document (UNICEF, 2018). The problems faced by the Roma community start from an extremely young age, and the early education and care of Roma children is still an emerging sector in itself (Murray, 2012). The number of children graduating from general school is 34.3% and high school only 17% (Cace et al, 2013). Also, a large number of Roma children are forced to beg on the streets due to poverty, with an estimated percent that 80% of Roma are at risk of poverty, compared to the EU average of 17.1% (Michael O'Flaherty, 2016). Discrimination and social exclusion are undoubtedly the most common and perhaps the most harmful type of attack on their rights. These attitudes are reinforced in schools, where they face segregation and discrimination, which leads to early school abandonment and therefore their chances of to find a job (UNICEF, 2014, 2015, 2018).

Methodology

This qualitative research aims to analyze how the violation of the rights of Roma children in Romania can be prevented. Given that the population of the Roma community has increased by 55% since 1992, when it had a population of only 401,000 to a population of 651,000 in 2011, of which 43% are under 18, the number is constantly growing. Due to these figures, the

study is of great relevance both in terms of the future of the Roma community and the future of Romania, where today's Roma children are tomorrow's adult citizens (R. Moldoveanu, 2016). The study aims to take as a case study the community from Pata Rât in Cluj Napoca. Which is made up of 4 sub-communities: Canton, Dallas, Colina Verde and Rampa, in these 4 sub-communities there are a number of 300 households, in which 1,284 people live. The age distribution is as follows: 708 young people and adults who have already reached the minimum age of 15 and there are 575 children under 15 years.

The study is intended to be a qualitative research. This method involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data eg text, video or audio, in the case of interviews in this study) to understand the concepts, opinions or experiences interviewed(Bhandari, 2020). In addition, it can be used to gather detailed information on issues such as the problems faced by Roma children. The main argument for choosing this research method, first of all, considers the pandemic situation, the interviews taking place online. The data used in this study are both primary data, collected between May 2 and June 8, as well as secondary data, from the CONSENT project (see acknowledgement). The main data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted in May-June 2021, being a total of 5, of which 4 were made through the Zoom platform and one-person answer was by e-mail. In this way I would like to thank the representatives of the organizations that participated in this study: E-romja, CEU, Romanoshuno, Consiliul Județean Cluj-Napoca and Babes-Bolyai University (BBU). The participants were chosen due to their expertise, having contact with the target community. The interview guide was conducted following a review of the literature, based on reports made by the Council of Europe or UNICEF on Roma children. The questions in the guide include 8 questions, which have been divided into two parts. The first part includes questions about the problem that Roma children face. The second part includes questions on how to prevent the violation of Roma children's rights.

It should be noted that this research has its limitations, the lack of direct contact with children in this category, even through online, is difficult to achieve, because, according to the law, children can be interviewed only with parental consent. Another problem is related to the research sample, which is far from being a nationally representative sample and does not allow generalizations. Despite this limitation, it provides detailed information on the rights of Roma children in Romania.

Qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data was performed using Atlas.ti software, which by definition is a program dedicated to qualitative research. Within this software program were introduced, the 7 transcribed interviews, being analyzed and coded. Following their codification, a number of 18 codes resulted, from which 2 subchapters were created: How the rights of Romanian children in Romania are violated, the emphasis being placed on the causes that determine its appearance; manifestation of violations of children's rights in their lives; and Preventive solutions for violating the rights of Roma children.

How the rights of Roma children in Romania are violated

Violation of the rights of Roma children is one of the major problems facing contemporary Romanian society, due to the unchanging and lack of involvement of state authorities both centrally and locally, where there is a great lack of interest in the problems that children the Roma did them "(Roma rights activist, e-romja). In other words, Roma children face the same problems they had before the state's accession to the Universal Convention on the Rights of the Child. This has been pointed out by several experts

O: Do you think there are improvements in the latest ways in which children's rights are understood, applied and respected?

P: "I don't think anything major has changed in this regard unfortunately, I have not perceived a change in this. As I said Pata exists, they are still there, they still face the same problems and needs and I think they will be there for a long time to come Pata (Social Worker, FDP).

"On Wednesday I was in Pata Rât and I found that nothing has changed since 3 years ago," (researcher in children's rights, BBU).

Poverty has many faces, it cannot be defined only in terms of income, it can take many forms and manifests itself in many ways, the interviewees mentioned: lack of certain material resources, which is the daily necessity, and exclusion from health and education services.

"Most face the lack of material possibilities, poor living conditions, lack of housing or overcrowded housing" (Roma activist, Romnoshuno)

"Lack of access to infrastructure, access to medical or educational services" (research expert, Roma community, CEU).

From the stories of the survivors, the lack of material possibilities necessary for the daily life that every human being needs, such as electricity and water. All these essential things for a large part of the community, from the statements of the interviewees, are missing in abundance. Also, living close to the landfill, access to infrastructure and services is limited due to the distance between the Pata rât community and the city.

„All 4 communities live very close to the landfill, the whole land is not covered, some have electricity, others do not, only at the beginning they have water, they have no electricity. Up on the coasts there is water and electricity but the conditions are still difficult far from the city, for children access to school is difficult, for adults' jobs are difficult to access" (researcher on children's rights, UBB).

Poverty forces the Pata Rât community to engage in certain drastic and illegal survival activities involving children. Interviewees mentioned practices such as: begging, providing certain sexual services to young women or drug trafficking.

"There are parents who send their children to beg, but this is determined by poverty, being the main argument" (Represented by the Roma ethnic group, romnoshuno).

"This is something that happens everywhere, even in Roma communities, I don't think about high-risk drugs, but about cheap grass or something like that. Not having a job, being rejected by society for so long, you realize that you need to live from something" (Roma Counselor, Cluj-Napoca).

These activities are the result of the absence of parents from the labor market, resulting in poverty that will perpetuate you from one generation to another. Adults generally work on sanitation or recycling.

"They will not hire you at Julius or Polus, if I know you are from Pata Rât. You go, "Sir, I want to work," he may not even ask you, "but when I see your bulletin, but there are also people in the community who work, especially in cleaning." (Roma Councilman, Cluj-Napoca).

"The state of poverty and marginalization is perpetuated from one generation to another, with all the dramatic consequences that flow from here" (Roma rights activist, e-romja)

The health

The children from Pata Rât face various respiratory and mental health problems, caused primarily by poverty, the houses being poorly arranged, the space where they live is a real landfill, their health being endangered. However, their access to health services is limited.

"Both parents and children have respiratory problems and pediculosis" (Social Worker, FDP).

"The children lived with the garbage next to them, you realize that their minds are slightly affected" (Roma Councilman, Cluj-Napoca).

"I had difficulties with the family doctor, he said he was tired of us, and he said not to go to him anymore, that he no longer receives other children and actually refused to enroll other children, saying that he has no more places" (Social Worker, FDP).

Limited access is caused by blatant discrimination. In general, the Roma are affected by this phenomenon in terms of the medical system, due to which doctors offer racist and discriminatory behavior towards them. Moreover, when the medical system hears about Pata,

they are not surprised by the health problems they have, coming to the live conclusion, if you come from Pata, it is clear that you are ill.

"When they went to the hospital or to the emergency room" they said "that he behaved badly with them and prejudices intervened, that he smells, drugs and what they want from the hospital" (Social Worker, FDP).

"You come from Pata, of course you are sick. Why are you come in the hospital if you've been to Pata? Assume "(Social Worker, FDP).

Education

All interviewees agreed that the situation of children in Pata Rât, in terms of access to education, is difficult, in most cases they are not accepted in schools in Cluj-Napoca due to racism and anti-Romani sentiments coming primarily from non-Roma parents, who refuse to enroll their children in schools where there are a large number of children from Pata Rat. This refusal on the part of non-Roma parents determines teachers and management, who want to thank them, do not accept Roma children in schools. Even in schools where they are accepted, there is racist behavior on the part of teachers.

"There is a kindergarten for a limit number of children, but there are many children in Pata Rât and not everyone has places there, access to schools is problematic" (expert on children's rights, UBB).

"If children come who cause a decrease in the performance of the whole class, non-Roma parents will not agree with it, therefore they come into conflict with teachers, with direction, who want to thank non-Roma parents" (expert in children's rights, UBB).

„A Roma child was taken by the teacher and said to him, „Ah said, gypsy, how is your family? "Do they fight in your family?" (Roma Councilman,, Cluj-Napoca).

Interviewees pointed out that children are not accepted in most schools in Cluj, becoming segregated, the most famous institution where this phenomenon can be observed is the "Traian Darjan" Gymnasium School in Cluj. Although there is a clear law that prohibits according to ally 2 of ORDER no. 1,540 / 2007, "starting with the school year 2007-2008, the formation of segregated 1st and 5th grades, having mainly or only Roma students" (MECT, ORDER no. 1,540).

"Traian Darjan - I can't tell you exactly - but I think about 90% of the school population is from Pata. I noticed, that is, it is a matter of this longitudinal that I observed - which extends for years, there is a segregated school" (Education Expert, FDP).

This has become possible due to the phenomenon of "flight white" more precisely, the majority community refuses to send their children to schools where there are a large number of Roma children in school.

"Romanians no longer want to enroll their children in that school due to the fact that it is overcrowded with Roma students" (Council of Roma Ethiopia, Cluj-Napoca)

"Parents send their children to another part of the city, preferring not to send them to Traian Darjan. Gone to other schools, precisely because of the idea that there are a lot of children from Pata" (Social Worker, FDP).

One interviewee mentioned the existence of certain schools, that practice an indescribable way of trying to get rid of Roma children from outside the Pata Rât communities by misdiagnosing them with special educational needs.

"It is a phenomenon often encountered with children who have ballots elsewhere, the following thing happens, teachers try to convince parents to send their children to special school. And this happens with very good children, "you know the special school, they are fed, they are not assaulted by teachers" and it is a large phenomenon, the diagnosis of children with special educational needs, even if not, we are talking about extravagant children " (Roma Counselor, Cluj- Napoca).

State intervention

The Romanian state does not react to the violation of the rights of Roma children. It does not investigate, but rather denies the existence of these problems. According to the interviewees, the state pretends not to know what problems the community in Pata Rât is facing, refusing to go out on the field.

"This word, 'we're not talking to anyone, we're talking to the prefectoral counselor' ... Man, come with me to the field to see what and how it is" (Roma Counselor, Cluj- Napoca).

"Well, this monster institution from Cluj that is the DGASPC and some of the people who work there, have a reaction like „ Well what do you want now? Shall I go to the field? Well, I'm not going to Pata " (Education Expert, FDP).

Preventing the violation of children's rights in Pata Rat, we can clearly say that it depends on the state, in the case of Pata Rat, the solution proposed by an expert would be the involvement of the state, in the true sense. Until it remains only in words, children will continue to suffer.

„ do we intend to move those from Pata Rât in 15 years? Well, in 15 years, you have to work with people. " Roma Counselor, Cluj- Napoca).

The role of NGOs

The contribution of NGOs is essential to draw attention to the violation of children's rights, acting as a watchdog. But they cannot work miracles, they cannot take over the role of the state, it is the obligation of the state to provide services, NGOs have limited resources, only the government can create policies, so state intervention in preventing violations of Roma children's rights is essential, NGOs come only with notification of these issues.

„ The Roma NGOs have essentially contributed to the introduction of these affirmative measures, but further, the way they are implemented depends on the Ministry of Education. NGOs can monitor and intervene to a limited extent in the implementation process " (Roma rights activist, e-romja)

"What can we do when we identify an abuse or a difficult situation that is beyond us is to notify the mayor's office" (Social Worker, FDP).

School mediator

I would like to emphasize that this mechanism is important to mention, because the violation of the right to education could be prevented by school mediators. An important aspect observable from the interviews is the lack of involvement from the school mediator that theoretically exists, but does not do its job. Unfortunately, most school mediators do not have the necessary expertise to be able to identify and solve problems.

"Theoretically, this school should have a school mediator who takes care of these students and facilitates their integration. But the school mediator does nothing. It's his fault. He is inefficient of his own free will." (Education Expert, FDP).

"The problem of school mediators is that they have a training below the level of university training and a salary well below the level of other specialists" (Education Expert, FDP).

Conclusions

Children from Pata Rât face the same problems that children in marginalized ethnic communities generally face: poverty, health and education being the product of the violation of their rights. The three mechanisms (state involvement, the role of NGOs and school mediators) complement each other, as the state response is a key factor in preventing child rights violations, but these violations must be reported and here comes the role of NGOs that must report and monitor, altogether with school mediators, cases in which children's rights are improved. All these mechanisms, however, become reality only if the society and the

authorities will understand an essential principle: on the "who is to blame for children born Roma", the state and the society have the obligation to protect future adult citizens regardless of their ethnicity.

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ANCORE ÎN TIMP – ARTICOLELE DE PRESĂ ALE LUI MARIUS MIRCU DIN REVISTA CULTULUI MOZAIC

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Abstract: *Marius Mircu had a prolific career in the Romanian and Israeli press, influenced by the cultural trends, but also by the socio-political situation of the country. During his long career (more than 80 years), he has published his articles in periodicals with a large audience, approaching various journalistic styles. The naivety that characterized the early articles (natural at the age of 16, when he published his first texts) was redefined in a satirical and humorous style, visible especially in his volumes, because the written press had entered a dark period in the years of communism, which, as is well known, imposed extremely severe restrictions. Marius Mircu was a supporter of the communist ideology in the romantic period of the regime, his works reflecting the official ideas and programs. The dry, non-expressive style characteristic of the iron language is also found in the journalist's press writings. After being excluded from the party, Marius Mircu had a special collaboration, from our point of view, at Revista cultului mozaic (Mosaic Cult Magazine), which is representative of the journalist's style and personality. The carefully chosen topics follow a logic of approach, revealing to us a part of the history of the community to which he belonged. The purpose of our study is to present the collaboration of Marius Mircu at the Revista cultului mozaic (Mosaic Cult Magazine).*

Key words: Marius Mircu, Revista cultului mozaic, Jewish community, history, mass-media

Introducere

Prezent versus trecut sau trecutul văzut prin perspectiva prezentului, a unui timp relativ, în care oamenii și locurile, deși au evoluat, trăiesc și simt la fel de intens, încă greșind. Tehnologia și internetul ne pun la dispoziție o arhivă aproape infinită de informații, însă pentru a ajunge la comoriile pe care oameni simpli sau personalități din galeria de elită a culturii române le-au postat pentru a ajunge la mintea și la sufletele noastre este necesar să știi ce și, mai ales, unde să cauți. Studiul nostru vă propune, deci, o călătorie de descoperire, înapoi în timp, punându-vă la dispoziție acele ancore, vitale pentru o viitoare documentare, încercând să readucă în actualitate fragmente din viața și cultura comunității evreiești, aşa cum au fost ele conservate în paginile, îngăbenite de acum, ale *Revistei cultului mozaic*. Unul dintre cei mai acerbi promotori ai păstrării memoriei a fost Marius Mircu, jurnalist și scriitor evreu, născut la Bacău, la data de 09 iunie 1909. A crescut cu tărie că fiecare dintre noi are o datorie morală față de generațiile următoare și anume, aceea de a așterne pe hârtie întâmplări, locuri, oameni și evenimente, aşa cum memoria noastră le-a păstrat, astfel încât, cei tineri să își poată forma o educație bazată pe experiența trecutului. Gazetarul a avut la rândul lui un exemplu, pe binecunoscutul Iacob Groper, pe care îl supranumea „legendarul” (Mircu, 2003, 53) și la întâlnirile căruia, organizate într-o cărciumă de pe Calea Văcărești, participa cu multă plăcere în anii facultății. Pe măsură ce treceau anii, reporterul s-a transformat, după cum îi plăcea să afirme, în „*cronicar al evreilor din România*” (Mircu, 2003, 81).

Înzestrat cu un simț aparte în ceea ce privește limba română, Marius Mircu reușește să se adreseze deopotrivă comunității evreiești, dar și celei românești, aducând-și contribuția la apropierea celor două. Scriitorul a descoperit acel pasaj secret spre inimile și mințile românilor, invitându-i să îi fie alături în călătoria de familiarizare cu obiceiurile, tradițiile și istoria comunității evreiești, al cărei păstrător și evocator a fost timp de peste șase decenii. Eforturile sale de păstrare vie a memoriei au fost apreciate de comunitatea căreia i-a aparținut și de care era atât de mândru, concretizându-se în evocări ale oamenilor, locurilor, evenimentelor, trecute și contemporane autorului.

Din punct de vedere informațional, cultural și lingvistic, scrierile lui Marius Mircu despre comunitatea evreiască sunt adevărate comori ale patrimoniului cultural național. Valoarea operei sale este conferită în egală măsură de însemnatatea informațiilor și de talentul scriitorului. Este ceea ce frapează încă din primele rânduri – îndemânarea de a se folosi de cuvinte, care par a se juca sub ochii cititorului, capacitatea scriitorului de a combina elemente lingvistice care se îmbină armonios. Faptul că omul de cultură scrie atât de frumos în limba română a constituit cu siguranță unul dintre motivele care a asigurat succesul volumelor sale și în rândul comunității românești, contribuind la apropierea culturală și poate, de ce nu, sufletească.

Această împletire echilibrată a dublei identități culturale – evreiești și românești –, care a caracterizat viața lui Marius Mircu, reflectându-se totodată și în publicistica lui, merită atenția noastră. Deoarece scopul studiului nostru este diferit vom puncta succint câteva dintre concluziile rezultate ca urmare a cercetării. Născut într-o comunitate în care proporția românilor și a evreilor era similară, jurnalistul a „absorbit în egală măsură ambele influențe.” A urmat școala românească, dar „conștiincios la heider, la nivelele treptat superioare”, a luptat împotriva hitlerismului pentru „eliberarea și a românilor și a evreilor”, a evocat personalități ale vieții evreiești, însă și ale celei românești. În *Revista Cultului mozaic* a „povestit multe momente semnificative din istoria evreilor români”, iar în volumul *Trimis special. Din amintirile unui ziarist* și în revistele *Magazin* și *Magazin istoric* a „răscolit momente notorii din viața României”. A fost mereu consecvent crezurilor sale și, cu modestia care îl caracteriza afirma: „Am vâslit în două luntri, am jucat la două nunti? Se poate spune și așa: dar a fost una în dauna celeilalte? Sau dimpotrivă, spre folosul reciproc? Nu eu sunt chemat să răspund. Atât pot spune: că acțiunile mele n-au fost de conjunctură și nu au fost acțiuni alternative, ci concomitente, paralele.” (Prelipcean, 2003, 396-399). A scris în limba română, chiar și după ce a emigrat în Israel, simțindu-se, asemenei lui F. Aderca, „legat organic de limba, literatura și cultura română, s-a privit tot timpul ca un scriitor român de origine evreiască. Altfel spus, un scriitor solidar deopotrivă cu poporul în mijlocul căruia trăia și cu neamul din care făcea parte, neacceptând să se renege nici ca evreu, nici ca român.” Era omul în inima căruia „pot sălășlui două inimi, două rigori, două intransigențe.” (Aderca, 1999, 30-31). Textele sale au văzut lumina tiparului în periodice românești (*Ziarul științelor și al călătoriilor*, *Timpul familiei*, *Bacău*, *Națiunea*, *Ordinea*, *Jurnalul copiilor*, *Adevărul literar și artistic*, *Jurnalul literar*, *Tempo*, *Viața Capitalei*, *Victoria*, *Calendarul*, *Dimineața*, *Filatelia*, *Gazeta*, *Universul copiilor* etc.) și evreiești (*Curierul israelit*, *Răspântia*, *Realitatea evreiască*, *Minimum*, *Copilul evreu*, *Neamul evreiesc*, *Tribuna evreiască*, *Viața evreiască*, *Revista mea*, *Facla*, *Viața noastră*, *Minimum*, *Revista magazin*, *Ultima oră*, *Buletinul Ierusalimului*, *Ecoul Nahariei*, *Hatzionut* etc.). Remarcăm că, în perioada când era corespondent pentru *Dimineața*, *Curierul israelit* și tipărea și articolele; corespondent pentru *Ziarul științelor și al călătoriilor* și pentru *Copilul evreu*. În perioada de după cel de-al Doilea Război Mondial, când era angajat la *Națiunea* sau la *Licurici*, publica articole și la *Răspântia*, *Neamul evreiesc* sau *Tribuna evreiască*.

În momentul demarării proiectului, intenția noastră a fost aceea de a analiza din punct de vedere al conținutului activitatea publicistică de la *Revista cultului mozaic*. Am descoperit pe parcurs frumusețea și unicitatea subiectelor abordate, ceea ce i-a permis autorului să includă o selecție a acestora și în volume. Ca urmare a unei ample cercetări, care a început

prin identificarea perioadei în care jurnalistul a colaborat la *Revista cultului mozaic* și a continuat cu o minuțioasă documentare și clasificare a fiecărui articol, suntem în măsură să vă supunem atenției câteva instantanee menite să susțină afirmațiile legate de această perioadă creativă din cariera omului de cultură. O parte din frumusețea spiritului reporterului dăinuie peste timp și atinge sufletele celor care îi parcurg rândurile asternute cu atâta har și dragoste pe hârtie. Materialele publicate de Marius Mircu în perioada 1968-1973 (excepție anul 1969, când nu a fost identificat niciun articol care să îi poarte semnătura) în *Revista cultului mozaic* vorbesc de la sine. Dragostea reporterului față de comunitatea căreia îi aparținea, la care se adaugă pasiunea pentru scris au condus la realizarea unor texte care au dăinuit trecerii timpului și, prin intermediul cărora, memoria oamenilor și a locurilor rămâne mărturie vie a celor ani. Un tablou al unor timpuri, nu chiar atât de îndepărtate, care rămân ascunse în negura vremurilor. Am evoluat ca națiune și ca popor, ne-am format ca urmare a celor interferențe, motiv pentru care, atunci când ele ni se dezvăluie, realitățile prezente devin mai clare și mai simplu de înțeles. Români și evrei deopotrivă, oameni simpli sau educați își deapără povestea vieții în fața cititorului, demonstrându-ne că, în pofida antisemitismului și a prejudecăților, cele două naționalități au știut să conviețuiască și că totul a depins de calitatea oamenilor. Este o lecție de morală, care merită cunoscută de fiecare dintre noi, ajutându-ne să acționăm mai înțelept în deciziile pe care le luăm. Subiectele abordate vizează exclusiv comunitatea evreiască și interacțiunea cu cea românească, demonstrându-ne că este un fin cunoșător și un excelent evocator al obștii căreia i-a aparținut. Artificiile stilistice ale limbii române sunt puse cu măiestrie în valoare de Marius Mircu, care, de data aceasta, îmbracă haina de scriitor, și nu pe cea de jurnalist. Articolele, de dimensiuni mari, publicate în serii tematice, aduc în fața lectorului informații inedite, într-un stil mai apropiat de cel al poeziei sau al literaturii, gazetarul renunțând la ironia și sarcasmul usturător, care îi caracterizau scrisul în anii precedenți. Contextul vieții i-a permis să își îndeplinească și acest vis.

Facem o mică digresiune pentru a vă povesti că acțiunile energicului reporter nu s-au limitat la mânuirea cu pricere a cuvintelor, el salvând, protejând și, apoi, punând la dispoziția curioșilor cărți, documente, manuscrise sau obiecte de cult și de uz personal. Toate acestea s-au petrecut în perioada prigoanei antievreiești din anii interbelici și din timpul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial, când, riscându-și viața, Marius Mircu a salvat de la distrugere volumele scriitorilor evrei sau obiecte de cult, care, mai târziu, au fost incluse în colecțiile Muzeului Evreiesc din București și în arhiva Comunității din Capitală.

Revenind la stilul ales pentru a pune în valoare conținutul informațiilor, putem afirma că este abordarea pe care anii senectuții (avea deja o experiență publicistică de peste patru decenii, se pensionase și dispunea de o oarecare libertate în alegerea subiectelor) o impuneau. Așa cum ne-a obișnuit deja, reporterul a reunit articolele publicate în *Revista cultului mozaic*, în volume, dintre care amintim aici *Oameni de omenie în vremuri de neomenie*, *Treizeci și șase de stâlpi ai lumii și Un cimitir plin de viață: Filantropia*. Ideea i-a aparținut cel mai probabil lui Marius Mircu, care își formase deja acest obicei. Cu toate acestea a primit o propunere similară din Israel, din partea lui Frenckel Eliezer: „M-am gândit la posibilitatea de a publica o culegere din articolele dumitale publicate în revista *Cultul Mozaic*, din București, din păcate nu am cu cine vorbi, doar dacă ar fi o inițiativă particulară a cătorva oameni. Eu, unul, aş fi dispus să fiu unul din ei și să particip la cheltuieli. În ceea ce mă privește îți stau la dispoziție” (Consiliul Securității Statului, arhiva operativă, d.# 175795, 269). Subiectele abordate pot fi încadrate în câteva categorii: români sufletiști, personalități ale comunității evreiești, tradiții și legende.

O altă particularitate a cooperării gazetarului la *Revista cultului mozaic* o reprezintă numele, respectiv pseudonimele alese pentru semnarea articolelor. Este pentru prima dată când Marius Mircu utilizează numele său de botez (Israel Marcus) pentru a semna două dintre materiale. Majoritatea articolelor poartă semnătura Marius Mircu, însă întâlnim și câteva dintre pseudonimele consacrate: M. Mircu, M. M. sau A. B.

Este momentul să facem cunoștință cu „fanaticii” (pentru a-l parafraza pe Vlad Mixich și al său volum *Fanaticii. Portrele a zece oameni cu vocație*), care și-au depășit limitele, impresionându-și compatrioții prin acțiunile lor. Marius Mircu i-a numit „oameni de omenie în vremuri de neomenie”, mesajul acestei sintagme fiind atât de puternic încât a fost ales de către omul de litere drept titlu al unuia dintre volumele care îi poartă semnătura. Poveștile emoționante de viață a acestor suflete calde ar merita relatate în întregime, spațiul și scopul nostru nepermítându-ne din păcate acest lucru ne vom limita la a selecta câteva exemple, mai puțin cunoscute. Cercetător echilibrat și echidistant, Marius Mircu a fost unul dintre acei evocatori ai memoriei comunității evreiești care a prezentat intervențiile și contribuțiile românilor la salvarea, spirituală sau fizică, a evreilor. Oameni simpli sau educați, persoane publice sau anonimi, tuturor li s-a recunoscut curajul șiumanitatea, întreaga comunitate evreiască știind să le cinstească memoria. Datorită articolelor jurnalului, opinia publică a aflat că, alături de antisemiti, trăiau, în acele timpuri tulburi, și filosemiți. Este demn de menționat și următorul detaliu: statul Israel aduce la rândul său un omagiu celor care au salvat evrei de la moarte în timpul Holocaustului, numele acestora fiind înscris pe un zid de onoare în Grădina celor drepti între popoare, oferindu-li-se simbolic „Medalia celor drepti” și sădindu-se un copac pe „Aleea celor drepti”, de pe Muntele Aminitirii din Ierusalim.

Marius Mircu aduce un frumos omagiu celui care a avut curajul și onestitatea de a se situa întotdeauna de partea dreptății, chiar și în momentele de prigoană, când antisemitismul atinsese cele mai înalte culmi. Pentru a ne convinge de calitățile umane ale preotului și omului de cultură Gala Galaction, jurnalul descrie o întâmplare la care a fost martor: procesul intentat, în 1938, lui Arn Ocnițer (Rotman) autorul volumului, publicat în limba idiș, *Evangelie Motivn*. Acuzația care i se aducea, de a fi adus „grave insulțe religiei”, era una de o gravitate extremă. Inițiativa, care îl va salva pe Am Ocnițer, a aparținut Asociației Tinerilor Scriitori Evrei, ai cărei membri, după o minuțioasă analiză a textului, au ajuns la concluzia că acuzațiile erau nefondate. Demersul lor s-a dovedit a fi insuficient pentru a convinge completul de judecată, cu atât mai mult cu cât mesajele cărții, scrisă în limba idiș, nu puteau fi interepreteate decât de un grup restrâns, aparținând comunității evreiești. Soluția a fost una simplă, dar eficientă: traducerea cărții și recenzarea ei de către personalități ale culturii române, de a căror expertiză trebuia să se țină cont. Trei personalități au acceptat propunerea tinerilor scriitori evrei: Eugen Lovinescu, Eugen Heroveanu și Gala Galaction. În calitate de martor, îmbrăcat în sutană, ultimul dintre aceștia a reușit să convingă completul de judecată asupra erorilor de abordare, mărturia sa fiind decisivă în stabilirea verdictului: „Drept urmare, – caz rar în analele justiției – sentința a fost dată pe loc: acuzatul a fost achitat!” (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #178, 5). Acest episod este relatat și în volumul memorialistic *M-am născut reporter* (Mircu, 1998, 456-457).

Cele mai interesante evocări sunt însă cele ale românilor, care, în timpul Holocaustului, și-au riscat viața pentru salvarea evreilor din ghearele morții, fiecare articol incluzând și o fotografie a celei sau a celui omagiat. Viorica Agarici și Traian Popovici reprezintă probabil cele mai cunoscute figuri ale comunității românești, pe care Marius Mircu le evocă la rândul său. Ne vom concentra atenția asupra bunătății altor oameni, la fel de revoltați împotriva injustițiilor și duritatei tratamentelor la care erau supuși evreii. Un dram de omenie a existat în aproape fiecare colț de țară, români sau maghiarii demonstrând că știu să fie oameni. Ajungem în Transilvania, aflată sub ocupație hortistă, mai exact în Satul Mare, orașul unde înainte de urgia hortist-hitleristă locuiau 18.000 de evrei (la momentul publicării articolului mai trăiau aproximativ 5-600). La Satu Mare o cunoaștem pe Antal Rozalia, o fetiță care a învățat de la mama ei vitregă ce înseamnă umanitatea și omenia. Nu a fost însă singură, fiind susținută de câteva rude apropiate, care au ajutat-o atunci când a decis să adăpostească în casă câțiva evrei. Gestul ei nu a fost uitat, astfel încât, peste ani, Antal Rozalia, care nu avusese copii, nu era singură: „Si cum Rozalia n-are rude apropiate și n-are copii și e văduvă de mulți ani, se simte fericită că a avut curajul să-și constituie, tocmai în anii de urgie, o «familie», care,

chiar dacă e plecată departe, nu o uită cu niciun chip.” Vizita la Satu Mare a prilejuit jurnalistului ocazia de a se documenta asupra comunității evreiești din localitate prezentând o serie de date statistice menite să sublinieze prosperitatea și mărimea acesteia. Începând cu prima atestare documentară din 1863, comunitatea evreiască de aici s-a dezvoltat constant ajungând să aibă două sinagogi, „cinci rabini, zece-doisprezece hahami deodată, avea heidere.” O vizită a reporterului la cimitirul din oraș ne dezvăluie un alt amănunt interesant legat de rânduile locului: „Vizitând cimitirul de aici am aflat prima dată un obicei: unii vizitatori evrei își semnează numele – cu creionul – pe mormântul unui rabin de seamă, ca să fie avuți în vedere. Cu creionul, pentru ca să nu se socotească problema rezolvată cu o singură vizită, să fie datori să mai vină, să-și reînnoiască semnătura, să nu uite, să nu fie uități!” (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #259, 5). Acest obicei va fi inclus și în seria de articole referitoare la cimitirul „Filantropia”. În cazul în care ne-am fi întrebat care era impactul acestor articole asupra audiенței, ne lămurește chiar gazetarul, dezvăluind în același timp și o trăsătură de caracter deosebit de frumoasă a minorității căreia îi apartinea – recunoștința. Articolul a declanșat o avalanșă de reacții din partea evreilor, aceștia împărtășind jurnalistului informații cu privire la alți oameni de omenie. Fiecare dorea să mulțumească în acest fel salvatorilor săi. Datorită acelor scrisori, eforturile și riscurile la care s-a supus familia lui Földes Dezideriu au ajuns să fie cunoscute. După ce au ascuns în locuința lor mai multe zeci de evrei, o parte chiar foști locatari ai Rozaliei Antal, cu multe sacrificii, soții Földes au contribuit la fuga unor evrei la Budapesta, în timp ce altora le-au asigurat, în continuare, un refugiu în propria casă. Földes Dezideriu era la fel de modest, ca și restul oamenilor de omenie: „Nu discută despre ce-a fost în vremuri grele, decât dacă este neapărat necesar; cum a fost, de pildă, prilejul de a ni se destăinui.” (Marcus, *Revista cultului mozaic*, # 263, 7).

Privilegiați față de restul țării, evreii din București nu au fost scuțiți în totalitate de pericole. Cosmopolii în comparație cu cei din alte regiuni, aflați în contact direct cu personalitățile vieții culturale prin intermediul conferințelor, spectacolelor, seminariilor, în rândul bucureștenilor întâlnesc mai frecvent oameni care au crescut, au fost educați și au trăit alături de evrei, înțelegând astfel că și aceștia „sunt oameni ca toți oamenii” și că, fiecare dintre noi are „obligația de a respecta și celealte religii. Si cum religia mozaică este cea mai apropiată de cea creștină...” Dar, când acești oameni făceau parte din forțele armate, unde antisemitismul era atât de prezent, faptele lor erau cu atât mai lăudabile. Întâmplarea următoare se petreceea în toamna anului 1941, când se dăduse ordin ca un număr de 200 de evrei să fie deportați. Intervenția salvatoare a venit din partea Lt. Col. Dumitru Vasiliu (originar din Piatra Neamț), cel care a acceptat să solicite Marelui Stat Major să i se aloce un număr de evrei pentru muncă obligatorie în condițiile în care detașamentul nu avea nevoie de un asemenea sprijin. Au contribuit la înființarea detașamentului și câțiva ofițeri „Căpitanul I, Puricescu, Dan Petcu, Pompiliu Boiangiu...”, găsindu-li-se până la urmă anumite responsabilități evreilor: să amenajeze o grădină de zarzavaturi, să descarce materiale sau să repare obiectele deterioorate. Un alt ajutor care a venit din partea Lt. Col. Dumitru Vasiliu, care a ordonat asigurarea hranei pentru cei de la muncă obligatorie, dar și pentru familiile lor, cu toate că evreii ar fi trebuit să își aducă mâncarea de acasă: „Lt. Colonelul Vasiliu a dat dispoziții ca aceștia să mănânce cu ostașii; iar seara, la plecare li se da hrană în vasele aduse de-acasă, «să aibă și pentru copii».” A fost unul dintre cei care „a rămas om, indiferent de vremurile pe care le trăia, de ordinele pe care le primea.” (Marcus, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #263, 7).

Siguranța, abundența din zilele noastre și confortul, care ni se par atât de firești, erau prezente numai în viața celor privilegiați în zilele tulburi ale Holocaustului. Semnificația acestor gesturi este necesar a fi privită în contextul mai larg al situației economice, politice și sociale a acelor ani.

Susțineam la un moment dat obiectivitatea și echilibru care domina personalitatea și scrisul lui Marius Mircu. Pentru exemplificare prezentăm în continuare unul dintre articolele

relevante din acest punct de vedere. Dacă au existat români care au salvat de la moarte evrei și reciproca este valabilă, meritele acestora fiind recunoscute și onorate de către statul român în perioada interbelică. Marius Mircu aduce la lumină sacrificiul lui Zalman Herman, un evreu născut la Bacău, pe care destinul l-a dus la Târgoviște unde, în iarna anului 1916, acesta locuia în apropierea lagărului de prizonieri români. Înduioșat de condițiile de viață ale prizonierilor a început să le ducă întâi câte ceva de mâncare și, mai târziu, obiecte de îmbrăcăminte. Folosindu-se de îmbrăcămintea primită, dar și de curtea evreului, românii au început să evadeze din lagăr. După un timp, sesizând lipsa prizonierilor, nemții l-au arestat, judecat și condamnat la moarte pe Zalman Herman, lăsând astfel trei copii minori fără tată. Pentru gestul său a fost decorat în 25 martie 1931 cu medalia „Virtutea militară de război”, acordată post-mortem (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #284, 7).

Și pentru că am vorbit despre un evreu cu merite deosebite, vom continua prin a creionă câteva tablouri ale personalităților vieții obștei evreiești, care și-au găsit odihnă veșnică în unul dintre cele mai cunoscute cimitire bucureștene – „Filantropia” – a cărei istorie rămâne o necunoscută pentru mulți dintre noi.

Doar un jurnalist precum Marius Mircu, înzestrat cu o imaginație debordantă ar fi avut capacitatea de a schimba percepția cititorului asupra unui cimitir. Dacă în accepțiunea majorității, cimitirul reprezintă un loc de odihnă veșnică, o sursă de documentare sau un loc de refugiu, pentru neobositul jurnalist, era un loc animat. Reprezenta nu doar o istorie, ci povestea unei comunități, realizările, credințele, evoluția ei în ansamblu. Așa cum viața este un uriaș scenariu de film, în care fiecare joacă un rol pe propria scenă și cimitirul putea fi considerat locul de desfășurare al unei piese de teatru: „Unii spun că lumea (viața, adică) e un teatru. Mai curând aș spune că cimitirele sunt săli (în aer liber) de teatru, cu rânduri și locuri numerotate. E primul lucru care te izbește: în față iau loc cei care au plătit un bilet mai bun; și mai iau loc în față cei cu «bilete de favoare». [...] Firește, notabilitățile trebuie să se găsească în fruntea obștei, atât dincoace, cât și dincolo de moarte. După fotolii vin cei de a doua și de a treia mână: cei cu loc rezervat și stal. La urmă, la galerie, mulțimea, anonimii. În cimitir, oricât s-au străduit întru aceasta, societățile sacre, oamenii nu-s egali, cel puțin la suprafață.” Desigur că această ordine era, uneori, deranjată de urgențe sau necesități (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #252, 6).

În seria de articole dedicate Cimitirului „Filantropia” avem ocazia să descoperim toate „armele” stilistice cu care jurnalistul ne-a obișnuit. Avem date statistice, umor, inventivitate, istorie, informații inedite, ironie. Pătrunzând în intimitatea acestui cimitir ni se deschid porțile unei călătorii în timp spre o lume dominată de tradiții, dar care a știut să se adapteze vremurilor. Incursiunea în „viață” Cimitirului „Filantropia” își are originile într-o întâmplare, în față căreia curiozitatea l-ar fi determinat pe orice reporter să investigheze. Un nume, care făcea să tremure inima evreilor, dar și a altor naționalități, Adolf Hitler. Simpla pronunțare a acestuia avea puterea de a stârni panică. Iar dacă adăugăm încă două ingrediente, evreu și piatră funerară, informația putea constitui o știre de senzație: descoperirea unui mormânt al unui oarecare Adolf Hitler, care nu avea nimic în comun cu dictatorul fascist. Pentru moment, curiozitatea lectorului rămâne nesatisfăcută, Marius Mircu revenind la acest subiect și dedicând un articol separat. Valoarea documentară a cimitirilor este incontestabilă, fiind evidențiată și de către omul de litere: „Sunt o adevărată enciclopedie a localității, a obștei respective, a omenirii. Cimitirele au oferit date asupra unor puncte obscure din istorie. Mormintele vechi, vechi de tot, prin cuprinsul lor bogat și variat ne-au furnizat o mulțime de cunoștințe. Unele popoare, unele civilizații nu ne sunt cunoscute decât prin mormintele lor.” Înființat în 1865, la marginea Bucureștiului, Cimitirul „Filantropia” fusese inițial locul de veci al celor săraci și al copiilor: „Mureau pe vremea aceea (pretutindeni) foarte mulți copii.” O arhivă bine organizată i-a dezvăluit jurnalistului tainele locului unde erau înmormântați nu doar bucureșteni, ci și străini, care își găsiseră sfârșitul în România, sau oameni din marile orașe ale țării. Explicația este una foarte simplă: era vorba despre oameni bogăți, care veneau

în Capitală deoarece aici puteau beneficia de tratamente medicale de specialitate. Marius Mircu selectează o serie de date din registrele cimitirului de unde aflăm detalii legate de ocupația, cauza decesului, situația civilă sau vârsta celor înmormântați acolo. Ne reține atenția un amănunt legat de obiceiurile de înmormântare ale comunității evreiești și anume, modul în care s-a schimbat percepția în privința reînvierii. Inițial, se acorda o atenție deosebită hainelor de înmormântare, care trebuiau să fie de cea mai bună calitate. În timp, datorită eforturilor rabinului Gamaliel și rabinului Iehuda Hanasi, care au pus accent pe caracterul spiritual al invierii, acest obicei și-a pierdut din importanță (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, # 252, 6).

Povestea Cimitirului „Filantropia”, considerat lăcaș sfânt, a unora dintre cei mai cunoscuți oaspeți ai lui, ne oferă prilejul de a descoperi o nouă latură a lui Marius Mircu, aceea a unui bun cunoscător al credinței iudaice, obiceiuri precum aducerea de pietricele bine șlefuite sau fire de iarbă nu îi sunt străine, jurnalul dezvăluindu-ne și explicațiile acestor simboluri: „Așa cum iarba reînvie an de an, așa să reînvie și acei decedați!; iar Psalmul 72 îi mai conferă un simbol: «Ca iarba câmpului să sporească, să reînflorească (poporul din Cetate)»”. Un alt obicei este acela de a aduce la mormântul rabinilor flori, candele și „biletele pentru implorarea ajutorului divin”. De asemenea, tradiția spune că evreii au obligația morală ca, de două ori pe an, să meargă la cimitir pentru „a-i pomeni pe cei apropiatați”. În cazul în care acest lucru nu era posibil, aceștia aveau posibilitatea de a merge la mormântul unui rabin sau să intre în orice cimitir, evreu sau creștin: „Te duci la oricare cimitir, spune în «Şulhan Aroh». Principalul este să fii îndoliat în acele zile!” Textul include și scurte biografii ale unor rabinii: Jacob Niemirower „piatră nestemată ce de-a pururi strălucește în obștea noastră”, „unul dintre marii animatori ai culturii ebraice în România timp de aproape o jumătate de veac. Cărturar, teolog, filosof, istoric, literat, publicist, conferențiar, profesor de istorie și de religie la școlile evreiești”; familia Șor: Haim, Ițhoc și Aizic, Avram Beck și mulți alții. Articolul se încheie poetic, cu descrierea tabloului pictorului olandez Jacob van Ruysdael, *Cimitirul evreiesc*: „Dale tumulare și mausolee în marmură neagră și gălbuie sunt grupate pe ambele maluri ale unui torrent în cascadă, pe fondul obscur al unei furtuni. Parcă auzi foșnetul arborilor amestecându-se cu mugetul torrentului. Soarele a spart un pic norii întunecați, luminând palid pietrele funerare. [...] Nu se poate spune că nu se degăză din acest tablou și o notă de melancolie, aceeași care te pătrunde în oricare cimitir, cu deosebire când e vorba de oameni aleși și bine cunoscuți...” (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #254, 6). La fel ca și în cazul primului articol, pentru exemplificare, sunt incluse fotografii a două dintre personalitățile care își „trăiesc” odihnă veșnică la „Filantropia” (rabinii Avram Beck și Iacob Niemirower) și a unei pietre funerare.

Pietrele funerare din Cimitirul „Filantropia” aduc în prim plan, pe lângă rabinii, alte personalități ale comunității, care și-au dedicat existența frumosului și progresului. Contribuția lor trebuie să rămână în memoria tuturor. Este dificil, de fapt imposibil, să îi menționeze pe toți, cu atât mai mult cu cât cititorului îi sunt prezentate și câteva informații despre viața și activitatea acestora. Galeria oamenilor de elită este deschisă de Adolphe Stern, „om de cultură, literat, filosof, jurnalist”, un apropiat al lui Marius Mircu, pe care îl „regăsește ca pe o veche cunoștință sub lespedea pe care au fost săpate (firesc, pentru cel care a tradus 11 din piesele lui Shakespeare) cuvintele lui Hamlet: «Pace vouă care dormiți pe necunoscutul țărm de unde nu revine niciun călător»”. „În rândurile de onoare” este Israel Bacal, avocat, „Președintele Comunităților Evreiești din țară”, dar și I. Bömcgis (vicepreședinte al Comunității Evreilor din București), jurnalul B. Brănișteanu sau Emil Dorian etc. Gazetarul consideră că merită amintiți și Alexandru Solomon (farmacist) sau A. E. Gaster (tatăl lui Moses Gaster, care a fost și unul dintre „supraveghetorii primei clădiri a cimitirului”). O secțiune specială îi este dedicată lui Aron Schuller, din Bacău, care a deschis un spital la Bacău și un cămin la București, acolo unde, Marius Mircu, pe vremea studenției, mergea la masă, deoarece prețurile erau modice: „Nu l-am văzut niciodată pe Aron Schuller, dar era necontenit prezent în viața mea; nu m-a văzut niciodată, dar se ocupa cu atâta insistență de mine și de atâția

alții...” Sunt doar două dintre contribuțiile lui. Viața acestui om este comparată cu un citat din Talmud: „Omul vine pe lume cu pumnii strânși, de parcă ar spune: Totul va fi al meu! Și e îngropat cu palmele întinse, ca și cum ar spune: Iată-mă, n-am luat nimic cu mine!” Partea introductivă a articolului este interesantă în mod particular, fiindcă prezintă simbolistica cimitirilor, a cultului morților în diferite credințe, făcând o paralelă cu concepția mozaică. În percepția multora cimitirul este „un loc pustiu, solitar, lipsit de viață, de mișcare; este locul unde sunt aşezate cele neînsuflățite”, în schimb pentru cultul mozaic „cimitirul nu e nicidcum un locaș al morții, dimpotrivă, e casa vieții (Beth ahaim)”. Cimitirul este un refugiu temporar, deoarece în crezul mozaic, „unul dintre cele 13 articole [...] stabilește că Dumnezeu îi va înlătura cândva pe morți, astfel că și locul de înmormântare e numai închiriat, nu este de veci.” Scopul evocării este exprimat chiar de către autor: „Să evocăm viața adăpostită în acest sfâns lăcaș, activitatea spre binele obștesc pe care ne-o amintește și o perpetuează”. Memoria acelor oameni trebuie să fie păstrată, iar exemplul lor să fie urmat de căți mai mulți. Sunt publicate, de asemenea, fotografiile a trei dintre personalitățile evocate: Adolphe Stern, Lazăr Mayersohn și B. Brociner (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #263, 6-7).

În seria dedicată Cimitirului „Filantropia” sunt incluși și oameni de știință (Iuliu Barasch – autor de manuale școlare, întemeietorul primei școli moderne evreiești și al periodicului *Israelitul român* –, David Roman-Rotman, Mayer Rudolf, Samuel S. Bainglas, B. V. Vermont), militari (Mauriciu Brocimer, David Alămaru, Anton Gutman, Iosif Netzler Trivalea), scriitori (Cibili Moise – unul dintre formatorii iubitului I.L. Caragiale –, Efraim Moise berăb Sender, Barnu Nemțeanu, H. Bonciu, Luca Bernstein, Alfred Margul Sperber, Osi Harmelin sau Adrian Verea), gazetari (Iosif B. Brocimer, Moritz Schweig, B. Brănișteanu – „gazetarul strălucit”, cum l-a numit G. Călinescu în *Națiunea* –, H. Șt. Streitman, Barbu Marian-Bernard Mayer, Emil D. Fagure-Honigman sau Oscar Lemnaru), artiști (Max Herman Maxy, Marcu Segalescu, Albert B. Leonescu, Froim Solomon, Leopold Kranner, Rudolf Steiner, Jean Marcu etc.).

Un spațiu special este dedicat rabinilor, biografia lui Moses Rosen fiind cea care ni se pare cea mai relevantă, datorită amănuntelor mai puțin cunoscute pe care autorul pe prezintă și pe care le redăm în continuare. Fiecare vine pe lume „împovărat” de o moștenire de familie, care, în cazul lui Moses Rosen era una de excepție, care nu putea decât să îl oblige să onoreze memoria strămoșilor săi. Stră-străneput de rabin-șef din partea tatălui, având sprijinul unei mame educate („a fost o adevărată erudită în învățătura iudaică, multe din comentariile ei asupra textelor biblice sunt menționate în operele soțului ei”) „nu mi se pare fără temeinicie spus că David Moșe ben Avraam venise pe lume împovărat cu nobile, dar complexe, misiuni general umane.” În plus, fratele său mai mare, rabinul Eliahu (Elias) Rosen, slujea o comunitate de câteva mii de evrei, la Auschwitz, numărându-se printre cei peste 86 de membri ai familiei ale căror „destine tragice, destinele evreilor de odinioară...” au fost curmate de către nemți. La vîrsta de trei ani, sub îndrumarea tatălui, a început să învețe carte, ajungând ca în doar doi ani să „țină predică în fiecare vineri seara ori sâmbătă dimineață, la sinagogă «A. B. Zisu» (unde slujea tatăl său), comentând capitolul din Tora.” După terminarea liceului, cu toate că urma să devină rabin, a absolvit Facultatea de Drept din București și apoi seminarul rabinic de la Viena. A fost numit rabin, în 1938, când împlinea 28 de ani. După doar două luni era închis într-un lagăr la Miercurea-Ciuc, unde a reușit să înființeze o sinagogă. După eliberare a fost invitat să țină o predică la o singagogă din București, „cea mai zguduitoare”, care i-a adus și oferta de a rămâne rabin la București: „Așa a debutat la București viitorul șef rabin care nu putuse să se înapoieze acasă la Fălticeni, numai și numai pentru că n-avea acte, i le reținuseră și i le rătăciseră în lagăr, iar în tren, în asemenea condiții, era primejdie.” Rebeliunea legionară l-a găsit la București, refugiat într-o casă unde de trei ori a fost înconjurat de legionari și de trei ori a reușit să scape cu viață. La moartea șef rabinului I M. Zalman a fost ales în locul acestuia, cu majoritate de voturi, de către cei 1.200 de delegați ai comunităților evreiești. Perioada deosebit de grea de reașezare a raporturilor dintre

comunitate și stat, când evreii încercau să își reia viața după prigoana hitleristă, îl obligă pe noul șef rabin să își propună două obiective: „tradiție și progres”. Toți rabinii pe care i-a avut comunitatea evreiască au fost oameni deosebiți, „un adevărat lanț de aur acest sir de conducători spirituali, care obligă verigile următoare să nu se situeze mai prejos.” Tradițional, rolul rabinului este unul dublu: „al Dumnezeirii către credincios, al acestuia către Dumnezeire.” La acestea, rabinul a considerat că trebuie să adauge încă două roluri: acela de a explica comunității politica noilor autorități române și, față de stat, să demonstreze că evreii sunt credincioși, dacă li se permite să trăiască în credința lor. Prin alegerea de către toate comunitățile, șef rabinul a devenit conducătorului cultului mozaic, unind toate obștile din țară (aschenazi, sefarzi, neologi, ortodocși). Participând la manifestările internaționale, șef rabinul aducea „noi mărturii cu privire la viața religioasă din România, câștigă noi prieteni pentru țară, determinând noi pași de apropiere între țările cu orânduirile diferite.” Prin acest mesaj, Marius Mircu ne transmite că eforturile șef rabinului erau orientate și spre îmbunătățirea imaginii țării, nu doar pentru apropierea relațiilor comunităților evreiești. Printre realizările șef rabinului se numără: reînființarea cursurilor de Talmud, reînvierea comunităților, renovarea sinagogilor și a cimitirilor, înființarea de restaurante rituale, acțiuni de sprijin pentru persoanele defavorizate. Aniversarea a 20 de ani de la numirea în funcția de șef-rabin a prilejuit un alt moment unic: participarea Patriarhului Iustinian la o slujbă la Sinagogă: „Întâia dată în istoria țării un asemenea înalt prelat pășea pragul unui templu evreiesc!” Momentul este surprins într-o fotografie publicată alături de articol. Nu este menționat, dar era cu siguranță una dintre directivele Partidului Comunist Român, având în vedere ateismul manifestat pe întreaga durată a dictaturii. Șef-rabinul și-a adus contribuția și la realizarea *Revistei cultului mozaic și Luah-ului* (almanah religios-istoric). O caracterizare sumară a lui Moses Rosen, așa cum a fost perceput de jurnalist: „E un om energetic și perseverent.” O altă fotografie este cea cu Nicolae Ceaușescu, care este numit „domnul” și nu tovarășul așa cum obișnuia presa comunistă să îl numească (29 februarie 1968). Articolul este prilejuit de aniversarea a 60 de ani a șef-rabinului (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, # 280, 8-10).

Aceste minți luminate stăpânesc nu doar trecutul, ci și prezentul și viitorul, deoarece contribuția lor este darul făcut posterității: „Aici trăiesc morții, aici vorbesc muții! De obicei, calitățile eminente ies la iveală abia după ce omul a murit; mireasma lemnului de aloe se răspândește după ce a ars. Mormântul oamenilor aleși este întreaga țară, întreg pământul pretutindeni unde se răspândește faima lor, opera lor. Istoria este glasul mormintelor.” (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #285, 6).

Un rol mai puțin cunoscut pe care l-au jucat evreii a fost acela de negoieri, de reprezentanți diplomatici ai țărilor „musulmane și în general ale țărilor din nordul Africii și din orientul mijlociu” în negocierile cu țările europene. Este vorba despre evrei din Orient, buni cunoșători ai „limbilor, obiceiurilor și moravurilor” musulmane și care se bucurau de încrederea sultanilor. Pentru exemplificare, Marius Mircu prezintă fragmente ale unor scrisori de acreditare păstrate în arhivele de la Veneția sau din Marea Britanie, enumerând numele unora dintre cei mai cunoscuți diplomați evrei: Solomon Askenazi (medic, nominalizat să semneze, în numele Turciei, tratatul de pace cu Veneția), Samuel Palache („trimisul Marocului la curtea Olandei”). Un astfel de diplomat, Isac Berg, a ajuns și în Moldova lui Ștefan cel Mare, fiind trimis – este doar o presupunere – pentru a negocia un tratat de pace cu Matei Corvin: „Într-adevăr, în acea perioadă, regele Ungariei acordă unele libertăți negustorilor moldoveni, iar domnul Moldovei acordă și el privilegiu «tuturor negustorilor din sfânta coroană a Ungariei».” Încrederea de care se bucurau acești emisari reiese din scrisorile de acreditare pe care le prezintau: „«Căci acest Isac cunoaște toate tainele noastre, de aceea să-i dați crezare ca nouă înșine, în tot ce va spune din partea noastră.»” (A.B., *Revista cultului mozaic*, #259, 5).

Marius Mircu alege să prezinte cititorilor teme puțin cunoscute, legate de operele literare de început din cultura ebraică. Pentru cei pasionați de artă și de poezie, gazetarul face o incursiune în lumea poeziei medievale evreiești, considerând că această perioadă a fost una

„deosebit de fertilă”, fiind însă „mai puțin studiată, poate și datorită faptului că înțelegerea operelor respective prezintă dificultăți mari, chiar și pentru acei care posedă bine limba ebraică.” Explicațiile, extrem de clare și concise precizează deosebirile și asemănările dintre poetii aschenazi și cei sefarzi. Pentru cei care nu sunt familiarizați cu literatura, cultura și religia ebraică informațiile sunt interesante. Primul amănunt, care nu surprinde având în vedere că tema este des întâlnită și în alte culturi, este inspirația biblică a poezilor: „Poeții aschenazi nu pot să concureze nici în ceea ce privește tematica, nici în ceea ce privește multilateralitatea tehnică pe colegii lor sefarzi, deoarece au trăit într-o societate ale cărei valori culturale nu erau atât de rafinate ca în mediul mediteranean.” Diferența se remarcă și atunci când ne referim la structura textului, care, în cazul aschenazilor, era una simplă. „Ei foloseau cuvintele aşa cum procedau pictorii poantiliști cu tușul pensulei: țineau cont nu numai de poziția unui cuvânt într-un vers. Ci și de efectul lui general, în ansamblul poemului.” Poeții sefarzi abordau teme variate, care reflectau „poziția socială a autorilor lor”, având multe „elemente personale”, în timp ce poetii evrei era renumiți pentru poemele din „domeniul liturgiei sinagogale”, care „se refereau de obicei la anumite rugăciunii obligatorii și erau variații pe o temă presupusă cunoscută de auditoriul poetului.” (A.B., *Revista cultului mozaic*, #280, 2).

Remarcăm numeroasele citate din cărțile sfinte, în special din Talmud, pe care jurnalistul le utilizează pentru a face legătura între contribuția celor menționați și credința ebraică. Problemele filosofice și religioase nu constituie o necunoscută pentru Marius Mircu care impresionează prin cultura sa în acest domeniu. Recenzia cărții, aparținând șef-rabinului, *În lumina Torei* prilejuiește un dialog revelator, care contribuie la găsirea răspunsurilor la întrebările legate de contribuția rabinilor și la motivația acestora de a scrie. Meritul rabinilor a fost și acela de a nu fi simpli recitatori ai învățămintelor Torei, ci de a fi încercat „să facă o punte între istoria trecută și cea care se făurește sub ochii noștri, între credința strămoșească și datoria către patrie, între cer și pământ”: „Le-o cere credința, le-o cer profetii, care, încă în urmă cu 2000 de ani le-au spus: «Străduiți-vă pentru pacea cetății în care trăiți! Fiți cetățeni loiali ai țării în care mâncăți pâine și care vă primește pe pământul ei, fiți cetățeni loiali și devotați!»” Îndatorirea rabinului este aceea de a veghea ca obștea să își îndeplinească atât datoria către Dumnezeu, cât și cea pentru oameni. Selecția textelor nu era una întâmplătoare. Cititorul neavizat află că Tora s-a născut ca urmare a Tablelor Legii, care le-au fost încrindințate evreilor de Dumnezeu, o nouă învățătură, pentru care poporul sfânt a suferit de-a lungul istoriei, deoarece „n-am acceptat să renunțăm la această măreată carte care s-a impus ca un bun al omenirii și al omeniei.” O altă carte, la fel de importantă, este *Biblia*. Încă de la început, evreii au avut un dar divin, carte, singura transmisă moștenire peste generații: „N-ai rămas în urma noastră nici capodopere arhitectonice, nici dăltuiri artistice. Am știut să ne folosim de miraculoasa forță, darul pe care l-am primit încă de la început: Cartea”. Învățătura și carteau ocupat un loc aparte în cultura iudaică, fiind singurele bucurii care nu au putut să le fie negate. Credința jurnalistului în importanța cărții, a învățăturii se regăsește în numeroase articole de presă. „Cărți. Punți de hârtie. O veche legendă ne zugrăvește drumul omenirii spre întâmpinarea lui Mesia. Pe un pod uriaș de hârtie vor păsi oamenii spre vremurile păcii veșnice și ale fericirii nespuse; iar podul acesta de hârtie este simbolul uriașei forțe a învățăturii, temelia credinței...” Această învățătură, carteau este cea care creează un „lanț” cu iudaismul și credința. Un capitol aparte al cărții îl reprezintă secțiunea dedicată sărbătorilor, „acești «munți falnici» ai credinței, [care] nu preamăresc fapte de arme sau eroi sau personalități, ci aniversează evenimente din viața colectivității, năzuințele ei, dorința de belșug, pacea.” Coperta volumului are desenată „o menoră în care licărește, simbolic o flacără. De-atâtea ori o singură flacără a ținut trează credința... [...] *În lumina Torei* este o asemenea lumină...” (Mircu, *Revista cultului mozaic*, #264, 2).

Așa cum este firesc, un popor iubitor de carte își dezvoltă o serie de obiceiuri și profesii colaterale. Odată cu apariția tiparului, evreii au creat primele forme de protecție și cenzură a

conținutului lucrărilor tipărite. Realizând impactul pe care cărțile îl pot avea asupra populației, evreii au imaginat și implementat un sistem numit „haskama”. Este vorba despre o recomandare din partea unor persoane autorizate, a rabinilor, fără de care publicarea unui volum nu era posibilă. Pentru exemplificare, Marius Mircu citează parțial dintr-o astfel de recomandare: „Am examinat lucrarea ce mi-a fost supusă de către venerabilul Iacob Landau, care sub titlul *Agur* prezintă o colecție de legi privind ritualul de fiecare zi și de sărbători, cu tot ceea ce este permis sau interzis să se facă și cu tot ceea ce e legat de el. Este o lucrarea care prezintă într-o formă plăcută obiceiurile și îndatoririle credincioșilor, precum și deciziile luate în legătură cu ele de către erudiți. De aceea mi-am pus semnătura [...] sub aceste cuvinte frumoase.” Ulterior, în secolul al XVI-lea, au fost emise reglementări cu privire la aceste recomandări-aprobări, care trebuiau să poarte semnătura a trei rabinii și a președintelui obștii (în Italia), în timp ce, în Germania, aprobarea a trei rabinii era suficientă (1603). Întreaga comunitate respecta cu strictețe aceste proceduri, fiindcă cei care achiziționau sau citeau cărți neautorizate erau pasibili de amendă: „Evreii pioși nici nu citeau vreo carte lipsită de haskama”. Aceste recomandări-autorizări constituie o importantă sursă documentară în ceea ce privește numele anumitor rabinii, care nu sunt menționați în alte documente: „Acesta haskamot reprezintă o sursă valoroasă pentru istoria comunităților evreiești. Mulți rabinii și președintii de comunități ne sunt cunoscuți numai datorită acestor recomandări apărute în fruntea diferitelor cărți.” (A.B., *Revista cultului mozaic*, #283, 5).

Revista cultului mozaic se număra printre publicațiile favorite ale familiei lui Marius Mircu, acesta confirmându-i într-o scrisoare trimisă fratelui său Leon achitarea abonamentului pentru un an întreg (1966). Din dosarul de urmărire de la Securitate, aflăm că nu doar telefonul jurnalistului era interceptat, ci și cel de la redacția revistei, consemnându-se amănunte mai puțin importante legate de vizita lui Marius Mircu în Israel (afirmația noastră pleacă de la premiza că oricum Securitatea era cea care îi aprobase pașaportul și deplasarea) (Consiliul Securității Statului, arhiva operativă, d.# 175795, 313). În perioada în care a colaborat la *Revista cultului mozaic*, omului de cultură i s-a permis, conform informațiilor din dosarul de la Securitate, să primească câteva exemplare din volumul personal – *Peste cincizeci de ani* –, tipărit în Israel, a cărui apariție a fost cea care a determinat urmărirea lui: „În luna noiembrie 1967, într-o discuție purtată de Mircu Marius cu informatorul „Marcu”, i-a relatat acestuia că este în posesia altor două exemplare ale lucrării pe care le-a primit din străinătate pe adresa ziarului *Revista cultului mozaic* din București” (Consiliul Securității Statului, arhiva operativă, d.# 175795,177). În continuare, în discuția purtată cu unul dintre informatorii jurnalistul îi recomandă articolul legat de Gala Galaction, spunându-i că periodicul îi acceptă spre publicare texte, care sunt scrise astfel încât să poată fi decodate de către „inteligienți”. Conform raportului informatorului, Marius Mircu era mulțumit deoarece „revista ajunge în toate colțurile lumii și că peste tot se știe și se interpretează realitatea din România”. Securitatea devine astfel interesată de activitatea lui Marius Mircu de la *Revista cultului mozaic*, existând o rezoluție de urmărire a articolelor pe care acesta le publica: „Informatorul are sarcina ca prin discuție ce le va relua cu Mircu Marius în continuare să stabilească ce alte articole publică în *Revista cultului mozaic* din București.” (Consiliul Securității Statului, arhiva operativă, d.# 175795, 187-188).

Concluzii

Talentul și cunoștințele lui Marius Mircu sunt puse pe deplin în valoare în articolele publicate în *Revista cultului mozaic*, ele reprezentând o selecție inspirată a cătorva dintre cele mai interesante elemente din viața și cultura obștii evreiești. Temele alese nu sunt reluate în periodicele românești la care jurnalistul a colaborat, cu toate că ar fi fost nu doar interesant, ci, mai ales, util, ca românii să aibă posibilitatea de a se familiaza și de a cunoaște tradițiile, obiceiurile și contribuția comunității evreiești la dezvoltarea culturii române. Subiectele abordate de Marius Mircu ar fi avut puterea de a schimba o parte din prejudecățile care

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